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King Lear

A. W. VERITY

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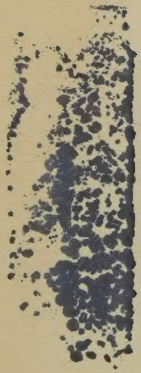

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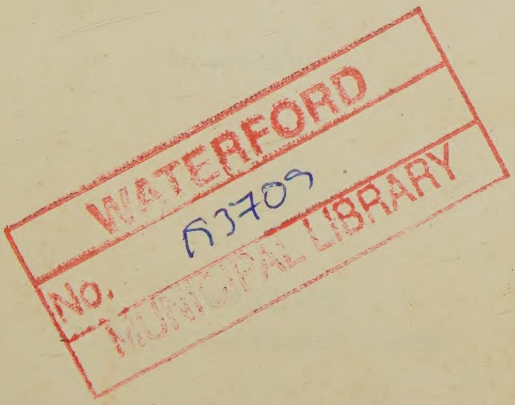

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SHAKESPEARE

KING LEAR

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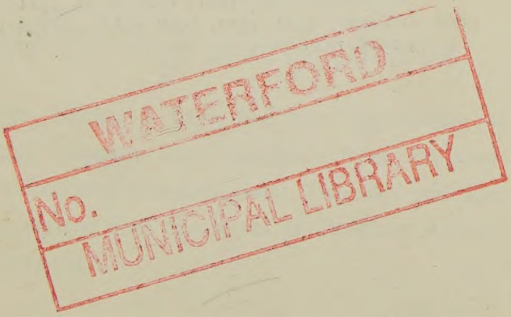

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NOTE.

I have the pleasure to acknowledge my great obligations to Mr Furness's Variorum edition of *King Lear*.

A. W. V.

August 16, 1897.

NOTE TO THE SIXTH EDITION.

In this edition I have had the opportunity of introducing extracts and criticisms from Professor Bradley's Lectures (*Shakespearean Tragedy*), and also a few suggestions from the works of Professor Raleigh and Dr Brandes.

A. W. V.

March, 1911.

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INTRODUCTION.

I.

DATES OF THE PUBLICATION AND COMPOSITION OF THE PLAY.

King Lear was entered on the Register of the Stationers' Company November 26, 1607, and published in 1608. *Published in 1608.*

It was probably written late in 1605 or[1] early in 1606. *Written probably late in 1605 or early in 1606.*

The points[2] of evidence, external and internal, that bear on the date are as follows.

(1) The entry[3] in the Stationers' Register in 1607 states that the tragedy was "played before the King's Majesty at Whitehall upon Saint Stephen's night at Christmas last": that is, on December 26, 1606. *External evidence as to date.*

(2) The names of the "fiends" mentioned[4] by Edgar are taken from Harsnet's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*, to which there are other[5] *Internal evidence.*

[1] May be that it was begun late in 1605 and finished in 1606. It is natural, but vain, to speculate how long a time a play occupied Shakespeare.

[2] All are given, from various sources, in Dr Furness's edition.

[3] I modernise the spelling.

[4] See III. 4. 108, 131, 134; IV. 1. 60—63 (notes); and p. 244.

[5] See II. 4. 53; III. 4. 52, 53, 83; III. 6. 30—32; IV. 1. 64; with the notes.

references in the play. Harsnet's book was published in 1603. *King Lear* therefore cannot have been written earlier than 1603 or later than 1606. Inside this period of three years we are led by certain indications to narrow the issue down to the late autumn of 1605 or the early spring of 1606. The indications are these.

(3) The second scene of the play contains marked references[1] to "late eclipses" and "the prediction" as to their "sequent effects." Now there was a great eclipse of the sun in October 1605, and it had been preceded in September by an eclipse of the moon. This great eclipse had been anticipated with apprehension, and the public mind was much stirred by "predictions" of the evil results that would follow. If *King Lear* was written while these impressions were vivid in the mind of the people, those passages in the second scene would have the significance of a current allusion[2]. The emphasis laid on the subject implies that some allusion was intended.

(4) A similar significance would attach to Gloucester's words in the same scene, "machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves," if written shortly after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, November 5, 1605.

[1] Cf. I. 2. 97—105 ("These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us" etc.); also Edmund's words, III *et seq.*, especially 129, 130 ("I am thinking of a prediction...what should follow these eclipses").

[2] Mr Fleay thinks that there is the same allusion, by anticipation, in *Othello*, v. 2. 99, 100:

> "Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse
> Of sun and moon."

He says, "The allusion to the 'huge eclipse' (v. 2. 99) points to the total eclipse of 2 October 1605. Shakespeare had probably been reading Harvey's *Discursive Problem Concerning Prophecies* (1588), in which he speaks of 'a *huge* fearful eclipse of the sun' as to happen on that day"—*Chronicle History of the Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 234. Personally I believe that "topical" allusions are not so infrequent in Shakespeare as is sometimes stated; see I. 2. 97, note.

(5) An indication[1] of the date which in the absence of the more striking evidence that we have quoted would be valuable occurs in III. 4. 174, where the old line "I smell the blood of an *English* man," quoted thus in one of Nash's pamphlets, 1596, and in other works, is changed to "a *British* man." The change must, one would think, have been deliberate. It was probably made in allusion to James's accession[2] to the crown of Great Britain in 1603.

II.

ANOTHER THEORY AS TO THE DATE.

It must be added that some critics assign the composition of *Lear* to the end of 1604 or the *early part* of 1605, on these grounds. There was an old play of *King Leir and his Three Daughters*. It was entered[3] on the Stationers' Register in 1594

[1] This aspect of the subject has been worked out, and the evidence collected, mainly by Malone.

[2] Cf. some complimentary lines addressed to James in 1603, before his arrival in London, by the poet Daniel:

> "Shake hands with union, O thou mightie state,
> Now thou art all *great Britain*, and no more,
> No Scot, *no English* now, nor no debate."

Cf. too the distinct allusion in *Macbeth*, IV. 1. 120, 121, to James's accession to the English throne, which shows that that play was not written before 1603.

In IV. 6. 231 the Folio has *English* where the Quartos have *British*. It is not easy to explain the discrepancy because we do not know the relation of the Folio to the Quartos. But the line is obviously far less significant than III. 4. 174, since the latter was a well-known quotation, and a marked change in a familiar line can scarcely have been accidental.

[3] Presumably it was printed then, but no copy of that edition is extant.

as a "Chronicle[1] history." It was re-entered[2] on the Register on May 8, 1605, and described there as a "Tragical history," "lately acted"; and was published that year.

Some scholars regard the description in the Register as an indication that Shakespeare's *King Lear* had been recently produced (i.e. before May, 1605) and that the publisher[3] of the old "Chronicle" play, which had been acted[4] as far back as 1588, meant to pass it off as Shakespeare's "tragedy." But this theory (which requires us, be it noted, to abandon the highly probable allusions[5] to the great eclipse and the Gunpowder Plot) seems far-fetched. "Tragical" is an accurate description of a great deal of the old play, though it has a comic element and the last scene does witness the king's restoration to his throne, and there is no reason why it should not have been "lately acted" at the time when the publisher said so (1605). Indeed it has been plausibly argued that, instead of the publication of the old play being due to the success of *King Lear*, it may have been the revival on the stage of the old play and its publication that suggested the subject to Shakespeare. On the whole, then, I do not think that we can do better than to accept the *late autumn* of 1605 or early spring of 1606 as the true date of *King Lear*.

[1] The common name for a play based on history or what was supposed to be history. Shakespeare's own tragedy was described on the title-page of the Quarto editions as his "true chronicle history of the life and death of King Lear and his three daughters."

[2] That this was the same play as was entered on the Register in 1594 is generally recognised, and, like other editors, I have assumed the identity in what is written above. Copies of the 1605 edition are extant, and the play is given by Hazlitt in Part i. vol. II. of his *Shakespeare's Library*, a collection of the "sources" whence Shakespeare is supposed to have drawn materials for his plays.

[3] "Who, we may presume, finding Shakespeare's play successful, hoped to palm the spurious one on the public for his"—*Malone*. The theory has been advocated strongly by Mr Fleay.

[4] According to Mr Fleay.

[5] Unless we suppose that the passages were later insertions.

III.

THE DATE 1605—1606 SUITABLE IN OTHER WAYS.

This date suits the general style, metrical characteristics, and tone of the play.

Style of the play.

The style is at once some way removed from the evenness and "equality between the thought and its expression" which characterise a play like *Julius Cæsar*, belonging to the middle period of Shakespeare's dramatic career; yet not so difficult and involved as the style of the latest plays like *The Tempest*, in which the manner of expression is often overweighted by the matter.

Metrical features.

Again, the large quantity of "run-on[1]" verse, "double" or "feminine" endings, short lines and prose, indicates a comparatively late period, though it is not that last period in which "light" and "weak" endings prevail. As regards rhyme—apart, of course, from the quotations from old ballads and the doggerel scraps improvised by the Fool, which have no bearing upon the point—*King Lear* has rather less than *Othello*[2], which several good critics assign to 1604.

Tone.

The tone is that of the third period, 1603 (or 1601) to 1608, of Shakespeare's dramatic career, the period of gloom, "during which, under the pressure of personal suffering, he sounded the lowest abysses of our mortal lot, and gazed unappalled upon the awful spectacle of the guilty and the guiltless involved in a common doom, and of Nemesis following as relentlessly upon error as upon crime[3]."

[1] See pp. 244—250.

[2] In his 'Metrical Table of Shakespeare's Plays,' *Shakespeare Manual*, p. 136, Mr Fleay gives the following figures for *Othello* (O.) and *King Lear* (L.):

Total number of lines, O. 3324, L. 3298; prose, O. 541, L. 903; blank verse, O. 2671, L. 2238; rhymes (five feet), O. 86, L. 74. It should be noted that one of the longest rhymed passages in *Lear* is of doubtful authenticity, III. 6. 102—114.

[3] F. S. Boas, *Shakspere and his Predecessors*, p. 135.

IV.

THE EARLY EDITIONS OF THE PLAY.

Two Quarto editions of *King Lear* appeared in 1608. Though one was not a mere reprint of the other, they were evidently derived from the same source—whatever that source was—and must be regarded as "practically identical[1]." They are disfigured by many misprints and obvious misreadings which the Folio[2] corrects[3]. The great discrepancy between the respective versions of the play in the Quartos and the Folio is that the Quartos contain about 220 lines[4] which are wanting in the Folio, and on the other hand lack[5] about 50 lines which the Folio contains. It is customary in modern editions to give the extra lines, if one may so term them, of both the Quartos and the Folio.

Variations between the Quarto editions and the Folio.

Of course, much has been written on the discrepancy between the two texts. The main point at issue is whether the Folio represents Shakespeare's own revision of the text given in the Quartos. Some critics have held that Shakespeare excised the passages which are wanting in the Folio, others that the omissions were made by the actors, perhaps after Shakespeare's retirement to Stratford or his death; in fact, that the Folio gives us substantially the abridged acting edition of *Lear*. The

The Folio probably gives the actors' abridged version.

[1] Delius.

[2] i.e. the First Folio (1623). For the ordinary student the Second Folio (1632) has little significance, except in a very few passages.

[3] There are a (comparatively) few places where the Quartos are undoubtedly right and the Folio wrong, and others where it is a matter of individual opinion which text gives the better reading. To some extent the text of *Lear* must be eclectic, i.e. based on the two Quartos and the two Folios.

[4] This calculation is Furness's. His *Appendix* on "The Text" of *Lear* is the source of much of what is written on the subject of the text in this edition.

[5] The most important omissions in the Quartos are I. 2. 103—107; I. 4. 318—329; III. 1. 22—29; III. 2. 74—88.

latter view seems to me much more probable. In shortening a long play like *King Lear* an actor would, I suppose, bear in mind two main considerations, plot-development and stage-effect. Let us look at the more striking of the omissions from these points of view.

The more striking of the abridgements in the Folio.

The most remarkable omission is the third scene of the fourth Act. The extreme beauty of the scene almost forbids the thought that the hand which wrote it erased it; yet, as Knight observed, it is mainly descriptive and adds little to the development of the plot (though it prepares us for the entrance of Cordelia and her meeting with Lear). The same may be said of a passage[1] excised in the last Act (v. 3. 205—222). Again, in iv. 2 the curtailment of the interview between Goneril and Albany, though it sacrifices a fine piece of characterisation and contrast, does not prejudice the plot-development. On the other hand, the consideration of stage-effect seems to have dictated the omission of iii. 7. 98—106 and iv. 7. 85—97. Each passage adds a touch of naturalness and is effective in its way, but that way is not the stage-way, for each marks a pause after the obvious climax, and the climax is the point where the actor, caring primarily for a striking effect, will always wish the scene to close. Again, the omission of the mock-trial in iii. 6 clearly bespeaks, to my mind, the hand of the actor, not author: the incident is a piece of daring imaginativeness which almost defies representation; in which the tragic might be converted by a trifle into the grotesque.

General conclusion as to relation of the Quartos and the Folio to the original version.

Now these six passages make up just three-fourths of the lines omitted in the Folio; in three cases the omission seems to have been due to a desire to curtail without obscuring the plot, and in the others to considerations of stage-effect. On the whole, therefore, I doubt whether it is possible to arrive at any more satisfactory conclusion

[1] Its omission makes the entrance of Kent and Edgar's words "Here comes Kent" (230) a little abrupt; but the abruptness would escape notice in the dramatic stress and excitement.

than that of Delius, who writes: "in the Quartos[1] we have the play as it was originally performed before King James, and before the audience of the Globe, but sadly marred by misprints, printers' sophistications, and omissions, perhaps due to an imperfect and illegible MS. In the Folio we have a later MS., belonging to the theatre, and more nearly identical with what Shakespeare wrote. The omissions of the Quartos are the blunders of the printers; the omissions of the Folios are the abridgements of the actors."

V.

THE SOURCES OF THE PLAY.

Antiquity of the story of King Lear which forms the main plot.

Two stories are blended in this play, that in which King Lear is the central figure and that which deals with the Earl of Gloucester. The story of Lear and his three daughters is, in its crude outlines, one of those legends of which the origin is lost in the traditional 'mists of antiquity.' Some scholars even say that it is a nature[2] myth. At any rate, its extreme antiquity is

[1] Schmidt accounts for the imperfections and omissions of the Quartos by supposing that they represent a crude version of the play taken down by some copyist, or copyists, during one or more performances, and marred by misunderstandings of what was spoken on the stage, mis-writings, and repetition of the actors' slips of memory. "Everything becomes clear, as soon as we suppose that the MS. for the Quartos was prepared by taking it down during a performance on the stage." But the supposition is surely far-fetched. Another explanation of the absence in the Quartos of the 50 lines that the Folio contains is that they were later additions made by Shakespeare.

[2] "According to some Celtic folk-lorists, 'Lir'=Neptune; the two cruel daughters=the rough Winds; Cordelia=the gentle Zephyr. I know no better commentary on the tempestuous character of the play; Shakespeare has unconsciously divined the germ of the myth"—*Gollancz* ('Temple Shakespeare,' p. ix).

shown by the fact that, like many immemorial folk-tales, it is told of more than one monarch, and exhibits sundry variations of name and locality. Probably it is of Welsh origin[1], and may have had some historic basis. The oldest extant version occurs in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin *Historia Britonum*, compiled about 1130. Later it was told, with variations, in a long list of works[2], verse and prose. In verse[3] we have the story in Layamon's *Brut* and Robert of Gloucester's *Metrical Chronicle*, works of the 13th century; in the *Mirror for Magistrates*, *The Faerie Queene*, Warner's *Albion's England* and the old 'Chronicle' play of *Leir*, already mentioned. In prose the story is told in Fabyan's *Chronicle* and others; in Holinshed's *Historie of England*; in the *Gesta Romanorum* and Camden's *Remains*.

Numerous earlier versions of this story.

[1] Furnivall. He says that "the folly of parents giving up their property to their children was often dwelt upon by early English writers."

[2] Pointed out by various editors. I have only mentioned the chief works.

[3] There is a ballad of *King Leir and his Three Daughters*. It is printed in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Most scholars believe it to be a later production than *King Lear*. The writer followed Holinshed's account, though in at least one place Shakespeare's tragedy seems to have been in his thoughts, viz. at the end where the ballad describes how Cordelia, who came to England to reinstate her father, was slain in battle, and how, when Lear

> "heard Cordelia's death,
> Who died indeed for love
> Of her dear father, in whose cause
> She did this battel move;
> He swooning fell upon her breast,
> From whence he never parted;
> But on her bosom left his life,
> That was so truly hearted."

In the ballad too the king "grows frantic mad."

All these works may be dismissed[1] from notice save three, through which there is good reason for thinking that Shakespeare became familiar with the Lear legend.

The three works that may be considered Shakespeare's "sources" for the Lear story.

(1) Holinshed's *Historie* was the main source whence he drew the materials of his English historical plays. We cannot doubt that he read Holinshed's account[2] of "Leir the sonne of Baldud" and his three daughters "Gonorilla, Regan and Cordeilla."

Holinshed's "Historie."

(2) Nor can I doubt that Shakespeare was acquainted with the play of *King Leir and his Three Daughters*, a crude piece of work but not without a certain quaint pathos and some pretty scenes. There is a courtier in this old play, one Perillus, Leir's faithful companion, who is not unworthy of being regarded as the prototype of Kent. There is a messenger who passes between the sisters with letters in much the same fashion as Oswald, and in one scene "Gonorill" intercepts him and asks to see the despatch he is bearing from her husband whom she suspects of sympathising with her father. In the old play, as in Shakespeare's tragedy, the king's abdication is complete, whereas in Holinshed's account he retains a portion of his realm and is afterwards ejected from it by his rebellious sons-in-law. "Gonorill" complains (as in I. 3) of Leir's constant fault-finding. In the scene of reconciliation Leir kneels to "Cordella," who bids him rise. There are a few verbal resemblances[3] which

The old play "King Leir and his Three Daughters."

[1] Popular works like the *Mirror for Magistrates* and *Albion's England* (a sort of rhymed history of England) were, doubtless, known to Shakespeare, but I cannot find in them or in the version in the *Gesta Romanorum* any detail whatever which should specially connect *King Lear* with them. All three works give just a bare sketch of the story as it appears in Holinshed.

[2] See *Appendix*, pp. 236—239.

[3] Cf. "Lear's shadow," I. 4. 225; "her young bones," II. 4. 158; "the pattern of all patience," III. 2. 33; "those pelican daughters," III. 4. 73; see the notes on the passages.

sound like casual and unconscious echoes of the old piece. Individually the points[1] of similarity are essentially trivial, but, taken together, they produce the impression that the earlier play was known to Shakespeare.

(3) The version of the story in *The Faerie Queene* is very brief (II. 10. 27—32), but it is remarkable for the occurrence of the name of the youngest daughter in the form "Cordelia[2]." *"The Faerie Queene."*

In Holinshed she is called "Cordeilla," in the old play "Cordella," in the *Mirror for Magistrates* "Cordell" and "Cordila." Apparently "Cordelia" is not found in any version prior to *King Lear* except Spenser's. In any case, it would not be rash to assume Shakespeare's familiarity with the account in a poem like *The Faerie Queene*.

These then are the three works of which account must be taken in considering the "sources" of this play: Holinshed's *Historie of England*, the Chronicle play of *Leir*, and *The Faerie Queene*, II. 10. 27—32. Shakespeare's treatment of the story as he found it told in these three works is highly significant. *Significance of the alterations in the story made by Shakespeare.*

He "completely changed the end of the story as given by the annalist [Holinshed], and reproduced by Spenser and the writer of the old play. In the original version the army of Lear and his French allies is victorious, Lear is reinstated in his kingdom, and on his death is succeeded by Cordelia, who is afterwards made prisoner by her nephews, and kills herself in despair. *Hamlet* was the only play in which Shakespeare had hitherto departed so boldly from supposed historical *data*, and the overwhelming horror of the final scene becomes immeasurably more significant when we realize that it did not spring naturally out of the dramatist's materials, but

[1] Most of these resemblances have been pointed out previously.

[2] Cf. Stanza 29, "But without dowre the wise Cordelia," and 31, "He to Cordelia him selfe addrest." In the only other line (Stanza 28) in which the name occurs the form is different; cf. "But Cordeill said she lov'd him as behoov'd" (her answer to Lear in the trial of his daughters' affections).

that it is the result of a revolutionary alteration in them. Shakespeare, when he wrote *King Lear*, was not in the mood that welcomes a smooth close to an eventful history. He wished to see the destructive forces of the universe pushing their ravages to the most malignant extreme, and over the widest possible area[1]."

VI.

"Source" of the Gloucester story which forms the underplot.

The bare "original" of the Gloucester story[2] is to be found in the narrative "of the Paphlagonian unkinde king, and his kinde sonne," in Sidney's *Arcadia*, book II. Fortunately this narrative, like Holinshed's account of Leir, is not too long to be given in this edition[3] of *King Lear*. Both should be studied carefully. The student will be able to estimate for himself the extent of Shakespeare's obligation to his "sources," and to see how truly it may be said that the quickening, creative spirit of the dramatist's genius made the dry bones live with a new and an ampler life. The characterisation (ever the crown of Shakespeare's art), the subtle involution of an elaborate plot and underplot, the study of the phases of insanity, the presentment of a barbarous era, the adaptation of natural environment and phenomena to the action and emotions of the actors, the "terror and pity" of the tragedy, the poetry and sublime thought—in short all that *King Lear* means to those who have pondered its mysteries: the only "source" thereof and "original" is Shakespeare[4].

Danger of overestimating Shakespeare's indebtedness to his "sources."

[1] *Shakspere and his Predecessors*, p. 438. Minor variations, e.g. in the names, need no discussion.

[2] "Here, as in the main plot, Shakespeare substituted a tragic for a happy ending." Note particularly the closeness of the parallel between Lear and Gloucester.

[3] See pp. 239—243.

[4] It is necessary to insist upon this point because the student who is told that some particular work is the "source" of a play, but has no opportunity of consulting that "source," may get an entirely wrong impression of the real facts as to Shakespeare's indebtedness. The pity of it is that

VII.

THE PERIOD OF THE ACTION OF THE PLAY.

The setting of the play is appropriate. The story of Lear and his daughters is reproduced (as Schlegel well says) with all the primitive features characteristic of the era to which tradition assigned it.

An "iron age"; its characteristics reflected in the tragedy.

"To save in some degree the honour of human nature, Shakespeare never wishes his spectators to forget that the story takes place in a dreary and barbarous age: he lays particular stress on the circumstance that the Britons of that day were still heathens[1], although he has not made all the remaining circumstances[2] to one scarce can use the words "source" and "original" without giving a false impression. Cf. the following valuable remarks of Dr Furness:

"What false impressions are conveyed in the phrases which we have to use to express the process whereby Shakespeare converted the stocks and stones of the old dramas and chronicles into living, breathing men and women! We say 'he drew his original' from this source, or he 'found his materials' in that source. But how much did he 'draw,' or what did he 'find'? Granting that he drew from Holinshed, or whence you please, where did he find Lear's madness, or the pudder of the elements, or the inspired babblings of the Fool? Of whatsoever makes his tragedies sublime and heaven-high above all other human compositions,—of that we find never a trace....When, after reading one of his tragedies, we turn to what we are pleased to call the 'original of his plot,' I am reminded of those glittering gems, of which Heine speaks, that we see at night in lovely gardens, and think must have been left there by kings' children at play, but when we look for these jewels by day we see only wretched little worms which crawl painfully away, and which the foot forbears to crush only out of strange pity."

[1] Cf. too Gervinus—"special weight is laid upon the fact that it is a heathenish time." See e.g. I. 1. 103 (note), II. 4. 20, 21, and Gloucester's words IV. 1. 37, 38 (as to which Bishop Wordsworth says, "I very much doubt whether Shakespeare would have allowed any but a Heathen character to utter this sentiment").

[2] Cf. the reference to the method of tracing criminals, II. 1. 81—83;

coincide learnedly with the time he has chosen. From this point of view we must judge of many coarsenesses in expression and manners; for instance, the immodest manner in which Gloster acknowledges his bastard, Kent's quarrel with the Steward, and more especially the cruelty personally inflicted on Gloster by the Duke of Cornwall. Even the virtue of the honest Kent bears the stamp of an iron age, in which the good and the bad display the same uncontrollable energy."

And this "iron age" accounts for something more and deeper than crudeness of "expression and manners": it gives the key to the conscienceless, ravening ferocity of character[1] that at first sight seems to make some of the *dramatis personæ* libels on humanity.

The characters of the play "are as the time is."

For "we know" (says Gervinus), "from the authenticated history of the Burgundian and Merovingian houses, that such times and such men *did exist*, that family horrors, as we read them in *Lear*, have abounded for centuries, even among Christian races. Into such times as these Shakespeare has transported us in the most tragic of his tragedies... the poet places us in the very centre of such an age, and brings actively before us a whole race endowed with that barbaric strength of passion, in which, almost without exception, the resistance of reason and conscience over the emotions of passion is powerless or dead... No sting of conscience pricks most of the evil-doers here either before,

the description of the contest between Edgar and Edmund (v. 3), in which the details all belong to the mediæval and Elizabethan Duello; the satirical account of a social state far removed from the primitive era of the play's action, IV. 6. 141—153; some of the Fool's sallies, e.g. his glance at "monopolies," I. 4. 148—150; and Kent's account of a serving-man, II. 2. Moreover, the whole conception of the Fool's part and relation to his master has a very Elizabethan colouring, though Jesters were certainly an ancient class. Gervinus notes that Edgar is the godson of Lear (II. 1. 91).

[1] Gervinus aptly quotes Edmund's words, "men are as the time is," V. 3. 31, 32.

or during, or after the deed; no agonised reflection upon consequences restrains from crime; here is no Hamlet, no Macbeth, with excited fancy, with terrifying powers of imagination, with the tender yearnings of an innate moral nature. These daughters of Lear, this Edmund, this Cornwall, this Oswald, frustrated in their designs, meet death without a symptom of remorse.... All human nature, in such a generation, goes blindly to extremes." And were there no Cordelia or Edgar to "redeem nature from the general curse" (IV. 6. 187), we should have to conclude that primitive man, far from being but a little lower than the angels, is not so very much higher than the "dragons of the prime."

VIII.

RELATION OF THE PLOT TO THE UNDERPLOT.

The play's unity of effect, arising from two causes.

The general parallelism between the two stories.

One of the most striking features of *King Lear* is that, though composed of two distinct stories and therefore not marked by strict unity of action—the πρᾶξις μία τε καὶ ὅλη of Aristotle's canon—yet it has essential unity of effect. Partly this unity comes from the general parallelism of the two stories, which start equally from one fundamental fact, namely abrogation[1] of the natural family relations and ties, but develop through incidents so diverse that the similarity of idea does not produce any monotony[2]. This general likeness of the two stories diffuses an atmosphere which harmonises the whole. Either story by itself might seem unnatural: combined they "have the appearance of a great commotion in the moral world[2]"; and acts which under

[1] Herein lies the essential "ethical connexion" of the plot and underplot. "*Lear* is especially the play of the breach of family-ties"—*Furnivall.*

[2] Schlegel.

normal conditions might offend the sense of probability pass as exemplifications of a general upheaval[1]. The villany of Edmund, second only—if second—to the "motiveless malignity" of Iago, becomes possible in an era and society which have produced a Goneril and a Regan; and their conduct *vice versa* takes on a colour of greater credibility from his. Where so much is monstrous the particular monstrosity loses its strangeness. The union therefore of the two kindred stories widens the scope of the tragedy, and their likeness lends greater *vraisemblance* to each other and a unity of effect to the whole.

Inter-action of the two sets of characters.

And this unity is increased by particular inter-relations of the stories, the development of either being made to depend directly on the other. Chief of the links between plot and underplot is the fact that Edmund's association[2] with Goneril and Regan proves the occasion of the nemesis that punishes their conduct to Lear. Edmund indeed passes from the one sphere of crime to the other and thus forms the main connection between the two plots. But there are others. It is through contact with Edgar's feigned madness that Lear's mind is wholly deranged; through sympathy with Lear that Gloucester suffers; through Gloucester's sufferings, in turn, that Cornwall, the insulter of Lear and Kent, is punished; through Edmund that Cordelia perishes; through Edgar that Oswald, the abettor of Goneril, fares as he merits; and at the last Albany the sole[3] survivor of the one set of characters turns for aid to Edgar the sole survivor of the other set. In fact, the characters in either story react on each so much that the piece becomes a single living organism.

[1] The likeness "startles and terrifies" by suggesting that the follies and sins "are no accidents or merely individual aberrations, but that in that dark cold world some fateful malignant influence is abroad, turning the hearts of the fathers against their children and of the children against their fathers" and against each other, and "smiting the earth with a curse" (Bradley).

[2] Most critics of the play dwell on the extreme felicity of this device regarded from the standpoint of dramatic construction.

[3] Kent is still alive, but his course is finished (v. 3. 322, 323).

IX.

TATE'S ADAPTATION OF "KING LEAR."

From the theatrical revival at the Restoration down to the end of the last century many of Shakespeare's plays were acted in adaptations—that is, in versions (one should say perversions) which introduced new, and omitted the original, characters and incidents exactly as the adapter thought would suit the taste of the public. *King Lear* was no exception. It was adapted by a minor dramatist named Tate in 1680, and his perversion of *Lear* was "the only acting copy[1]" down to 1838, when Macready restored Shakespeare's tragedy to the stage. All the great actors of this period, 1680—1838—Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Edmund Kean—appeared in Tate's *Lear*. The two great[2] features of this daring composition are that Edgar is made from the outset the lover of Cordelia (the character of "France" being dropped altogether), and that the piece "ends happily" with Lear's restoration to his kingdom and the union of the

[1] Furness quotes from Macready's *Reminiscences*: "Tate's King *Lear* was the only acting copy from the date of its production until the restoration of Shakespeare's tragedy at Covent Garden in 1838. Previously to that, I think, in the year 1823, or a little later, the play, Tate's, was acted by Kean, with the last Scene of the original restored."

[2] It is also very significant of the 'correct,' Gallicised taste of his age that Tate entirely omits the character of the Fool. Some of the additions made are very amusing—unintentionally. Furness quotes a delicious extract; instead of Lear's "O, reason not the need" (II. 4. 260 *et seq.*), we get this noble specimen of "the material sublime":

"*Regan.* What need one?
Lear. Bloud! Fire! here—Leprosies and bluest Plagues!
Room, room for Hell to belch her Horrors up
And drench the *Circes* in a stream of Fire;
Heark how th' Infernals eccho to my rage
Their Whips and Snakes."

In Addison's opinion (*The Spectator*, 44) the tragedy had "lost half its beauty" through this stage-perversion: a criticism to be remembered to his honour.

lovers. Now the impertinence of this sentimental element of love-making needs no comment, but some sympathy is possible with Tate's desire of "making the Tragedy conclude in a Success to the innocent distrest Persons." One can scarcely resist a superficial wish that the tragedy did end differently; but it could not; the catastrophe was inevitable.

X.

THE ENDING OF THE PLAY.

A "happy ending" to *King Lear* would be an anticlimax, a dramatic παραπροσδοκίαν stultifying the whole drift of the drama. "If[1] Lear is to live and be happy after... why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with this unnecessary sympathy[2]?" We should have to say, as Antonio of Gonzalo's commonwealth, that "the latter end forgets the beginning," and the middle too. Here is no place for the intervention of a Poetic Justice with her convenient conventions. As the criminals work out their own dooms with the *natural inevitableness* of life, so Lear and those who come within the scope of his actions must suffer to the full the consequences of his folly. And his sufferings are such as nothing in this world can set right. The only friend who can help him is Death the Releaser. And with him must Cordelia die, involved in the consequences of his error and her own. Dramatic fitness demands her death (and the facts of life justify it). For, as has been pithily said, how should we have felt had Cordelia survived her father[3]? To ask is to

Necessity that Lear should die; and Cordelia.

[1] Charles Lamb. See the whole passage (pp. 243, 244), which cannot be studied too closely.

[2] Schlegel writes to the same effect: "if Lear is to be saved and to pass the remainder of his days in happiness, the whole [i.e. play] loses its signification."

[3] "Consider how you should have felt had Cordelia survived Lear or Ophelia survived her father, her brother, and her lover, and you will recognise the dramatic justice of involving them in the general ruin of

answer the question. You cannot dissociate them. Theirs was a joint "sacrifice" (v. 3. 20), as Lear knew: "he that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven" (v. 3. 22).

There are those who speak as if Cordelia deserved in some measure what she suffers; who interpret her refusal in the first scene to humour the old man's whim as 'pride' and 'obstinacy,' even 'undutiful defiance.' But that seems an undeserved judgment. What we see otherwise of Cordelia justifies us in thinking that her unwillingness to say the few words which might have saved Lear and herself from all that befalls them did not arise from any unworthy feelings, but was, rather, that lothness to speak of its affections which is so natural to a strong and reserved character. Her conduct was more error than fault, and the fate that overtook her is an illustration of two truths—that error may entail the most grievous material consequences no less than sin itself, and that the innocent do suffer for the sins and follies of others, more especially of those whom they love best.

Is the close of the tragedy really pessimistic?

Nor, after all, is the close of the tragedy without its true consolations; for to Lear suffering has brought knowledge of himself and of his child, with all that such knowledge means; and to Cordelia it has been granted to prove by deeds the love she could not show in words; and to both, as we are made to feel, the end is but another beginning[1]. And perhaps it is really this feeling

their friends and enemies"—*Minto* (*Characteristics of English Poets*, p. 321).

It has also been said that the "national aspect" must be taken into account when we are considering the propriety of the tragic ending of *King Lear*: that an Elizabethan dramatist could not represent French troops victorious on British soil. But this surely is a side-issue, at most one of the contributory causes, not the real *causa causans* of the ending, which morally and artistically is the inevitable outcome of the whole action. If the tragedy should or could have ended differently, would Shakespeare have sacrificed dramatic fitness to patriotism?

[1] Note in this connection the beauty and effectiveness of Kent's last words, where "my master" is of course Lear. There is in them the

—together with the thought which Shakespeare never fails to inspire, that goodness and wickedness are each its own reward, and a true reward—that reconciles us to the close of tragedies in which the great sufferers, a Lear, an Othello, are 'more victims than offenders.'

XI.

THE CHARACTERS.

Lear.

The chief figure of the plot is of course Lear himself, and the main idea, I take it, is to show the effect upon him (and, indeed, upon others) of the consequences[1] of what he does at the outset of the play. Now Lear, we must remember, is a very old man—"fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less" (IV. 7. 61); we can scarcely speak therefore of his character 'developing.' Rather, his character is revealed to us briefly in its leading features and we are then bidden to observe how a man of this character will be affected by a peculiar change in his life and circumstances. The net result of the change is that Lear goes mad. The main interest therefore of the plot is bound up with his madness[2], the development of which has aptly been likened to an arch.

note of reunion (and so of hope): as even in Lear's despairing cry "thou'lt *come* no more." And though the period of the play is 'heathen,' yet the notion of a future existence is brought out clearly in one of the most affecting scenes (IV. 7. 45—49).

[1] Mr Moulton makes the suggestive remark that the plot of *Lear* is more the working out of a problem—namely, what will be the results of Lear's action in Scene 1—and the underplot more an intrigue.

[2] Lear's madness has been made the subject of various treatises and essays by experts in mental disease. One of the best known of these essays is Dr Bucknill's, to which and to the admirable analysis in Mr Moulton's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* I am greatly indebted. In connection with Shakespeare's medical knowledge it is interesting to remember that his eldest daughter married, in 1607, a well-known physician of Stratford.

Causes and phases of Lear's insanity.

The first[1] scene indicates his predisposition to insanity. We are shown that passion, which has a physical effect as well as a moral, has become a disease in him. Self-will has developed into an emotion over which he has lost control through "long-ingrafted condition" and the enfeeblement of mental and bodily powers that great age involves, so that under the influence of emotion he is practically irresponsible. This is made plain in Scene I; and at his next appearance we see how he is affected by the two chief results of his action, namely his own remorse and the opposition of those whom he has hitherto commanded. The effect of remorse is not emphasised strongly but must be taken into account. It has kept up in him a state of unrest in which opposition becomes even less tolerable than it would have been. It is an opposition against which his passion dashes itself in vain, and whereas formerly his passion would subside through removal of the cause that excited it, now that he has stripped himself of all temporal power and cannot remove the cause, he is thrown back upon self-control. But this moral power too he has lost. And so he is helpless, and feels himself to be so (I. 5. 43, 44). He does indeed try to keep down the rising tide of *hysterica passio* (II. 4. 53—55), but his efforts are despairing and unavailing, and he is driven more and more into a condition of 'morbid' and uncontrollable emotion. This condition, we are told by experts, may be converted by some shock, e.g. great physical suffering, into insanity. In Lear's case this shock is exposure to the storm: his "wits *begin* to turn" (III. 2. 62). Then comes a second shock, the meeting with Edgar. Insanity generates insanity; the less insane imitate the more. The effect

[1] It has often been remarked that *Lear*, unlike any other of Shakespeare's plays, starts from, and wholly depends upon, incidents which in themselves would seem improbable, viz. the trial of affection and abdication; but that these incidents are made to appear probable through the peculiar character attributed to the king, which from the very outset rationalises the story. Cf. Hazlitt, "the character of Lear itself is very finely conceived for the purpose. It is the only ground on which such a story could be built with the greatest effect and truth."

on Lear of Edgar's assumed madness is soon visible (III. 4. 96—103): "the king grows mad" (155), and gets madder, as the scene progresses. When he re-appears (Scene 6) "all the power of his wits" has given way (III. 6. 4), so that he is subject to hallucinations (III. 6. 20—55), and afterwards (IV. 4. 1—10, IV. 6) is utterly a lunatic, "cut to the brains" (IV. 6. 174). Then comes the last stage. Remedies are applied which alleviate his disease on its physical side, one of the original moral causes of his hysteric excitement is removed through reconciliation with Cordelia, and he is too broken in spirit to care any more about anybody or anything except the child on whose "kind nursery" he does after all "set his rest" (I. 1. 117, 118). He has regained a composure akin to sanity, but his general enfeeblement is so great that if he lived it could only be in a condition not far removed from dotage. This, no doubt, was one of the reasons why Shakespeare made the play end as it does. No one could wish to think of Lear living in a sort of second childhood.

Apart from his insanity, and the qualities which predispose and contribute to it, Lear's character is not individualised by very striking or complex traits. One should note, however, that amid all his afflictions he remains "every inch a king[1]" (IV. 6. 107), nay, grows more kingly; and that, as Moberly well says, it is an entire mistake to suppose that "Shakespeare intended him to be weak and foolish," though his action in resigning his authority was foolish. The very pathos of his humiliations lies in the fact that he is so regal in all his instincts and ways, and strong-willed.

Cordelia.

The impression which Cordelia, the Antigone of the English Drama, makes upon the imagination is hard to analyse. "Everything in her seems to lie beyond our view, and affects us in a manner which we feel rather than perceive[2]." She appears in only a few scenes, yet the beauty

[1] Cf. IV. 6. 180—182; I. 4. 27—30.

[2] Mrs Jameson, *Characteristics of Women*. She has a beautiful criticism on Cordelia's character, to which I am indebted.

and pathos that cling round her are a haunting memory. Partly the impression is due to indirect causes external to herself. Chief of these is the contrast between her and Goneril and Regan, whose enormities not only act as a direct foil which throws into relief Cordelia's filial devotion, but are so repellent that the imagination reverts continually, and even unconsciously, to this figure which stands for all that is normal in humanity and agreeable to its moral sense. Another cause is the mere pity of her fate and of her father's sufferings, for their intensity naturally quickens our sympathy with those who make his cause theirs. And then we cannot but be affected by her presence when we see how those around her are affected, more especially Lear and France and Kent—what devotion and admiration follow her steps. All these considerations count for something; but above all is the grace of her character.

Like Lear's, it is simply drawn[1]. In order, may be, to harmonise the *dramatis personæ* with the rude period of the events, Shakespeare has not endowed them with those subtleties and contradictions of character which are the outcome of a civilised environment and its more complex conditions of life. The characterisation is ideal. The persons each embody some special quality: "Goneril and Regan, the destructive force, the ravening egoism in humanity which is at war with all goodness; Kent, a clear, unmingled fidelity; Cordelia, unmingled tenderness and love." Those qualities, tenderness and strength—when united, the heaven-sent complement of each other—are the essentials of Cordelia's nature. Hers is the power of loving with the strongest, purest devotion, and of inspiring love. And as those who feel most deeply are least demonstrative her bearing is marked by a reserve behind which her force of character and affection makes itself perceptible, like some unseen, spiritual presence (I. 1. 85, 86, IV. 3. 32).

Her strength is shown at the outset. There may be an

[1] Bradley has the acute criticism that there is no other character in Shakespeare who, appearing so little and speaking so little, makes so profound an impression. Altogether Shakespeare's women are simpler characters than his men (Raleigh).

"indiscreet simplicity[1]" in her reluctance to gratify Lear's request, but it argues a strong will and nerve. There is the note of self-possession and insight into character in her curt dismissal of Burgundy (I. 1. 242—244). She reads her sisters aright (I. 1. 263—270) and acts accordingly, with foresight and practical sense[2]. She exercises over others the influence of a strong nature: France does her desires; Kent relies on her completely (II. 2. 159—163); on Lear her reposeful presence acts like a charm (IV. 7). There is a queenly dignity in all her movements which does not desert her in the hour of defeat (V. 3). She does not expend her energy in restless speech like the somewhat hysterical Regan, but what she does say—in that "soft, low voice" (V. 3. 273, 274)—is ever to the point, and the rare rebuke falls with grave, crushing force from her lips (V. 3. 7). Everything about Cordelia shows that she has what one calls strength of character and capacity. And this quiet strength is penetrated with an infinite tenderness, "too sacred for words, and almost too deep for tears." Though Lear had misunderstood her so, yet he best expressed the inexpressible effect of her beauty of character when he called her "a soul in bliss... a spirit (IV. 7. 46, 49)." There is in truth a something not-of-this-world in her ethereal purity of love and self-sacrifice.

Goneril and Regan contrasted.

Whenever Goneril and Regan are introduced "pure horror[3]" reigns, as from the presence of "Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire." This horror tends to obscure the distinction between them. Yet the twin monsters are differentiated in appearance and character. Regan is of a more feminine[4] bearing; her eyes have not the

[1] Hazlitt.

[2] See I. 1. 267, note.

[3] Coleridge. He notes that Goneril and Regan do not appear often, so that the peculiar effect of horror which they produce is not lessened, as it might be, by familiarity; and that when they are present, "not a sentiment, not an image, which can give pleasure on its own account, is admitted."

[4] See the note on "tender-hefted," II. 4. 167.

fierce burning light of Goneril's—indeed, their expression seems kind (II. 4. 168, 169); probably it is to her alone that Lear applies the epithet "well-favoured" (II. 4. 252). Goneril looks the more formidable—and is[1]. She has originality of mind and a scheming brain; sees quickly the bearing of events[2], forms rapid decisions without asking advice, and translates them into rapid, unflinching action without heeding anyone's opposition; and she is never hampered by a scruple. Regan, on the other hand, does not originate, but catches up ideas quickly and echoes what others have said[3]; she looks for support and "needful counsel" (II. 1. 127), seems to shrink from taking decisive action on her own responsibility, and does not feel quite comfortable in the enormities to which her sister leads her. For a character such as Goneril's naturally takes the lead, and we find that she dominates all, save Edmund, with whom she comes in contact—not least Regan, to whom at each crisis she writes instructions (I. 4. 327—329, IV. 2. 87) and who refers to her with something like awe. It is she who foresees the difficulties that will arise from Lear's abdication, and whereas Regan would put them aside for the moment ("we shall *think* further of it"), Goneril faces them ("we must *do* something, and i' the heat"); and we soon see that she means what she says. But Regan, though forewarned and though her sister has taken the first, the difficult step, weakly hurries from home instead of grappling with the situation there and then, and when Lear overtakes them at Gloucester's house still seeks to put off the interview. Afterwards, having between them driven the old man to the verge of madness, Regan falls to uneasy explanations, self-excusings and moralising (II. 4. 284, 285, 288, 289, 298—305), but Goneril preserves an unruffled indifference. Regan, in fact, gives one the impression of being just as evil-hearted as her sister and even more "willing to

[1] Even in the first scene Lear addresses her (46, 47) in a different tone from his "dearest Regan" (61).

[2] Cf. especially IV. 2. 83—87.

[3] Cf. I. 1. 279—301, where each remark of hers is merely an expansion of what Goneril has said, and II. 4. 241—259.

wound," but intellectually inferior and without the conscienceless[1] callousness and iron will which make Goneril as terrible as some destructive force of nature.

Yet, though Goneril is the prime mover of the crusade of cruelty against their father and draws her sister into it, she does not seem to me so cruel naturally as Regan. Cruelty acts wantonly and argues a certain pettiness of nature. Now there is always method in Goneril's monstrosities, a purpose in them. She regards the king's whims and complaints and his train of knights as a real grievance, as they probably are; and when she has an object, the removal of a grievance —or a husband—she lets nothing stand in the way, she merely tramples it under foot. But she does not go out of her way wilfully to inflict pain; it is simply nothing at all to her whether or not others suffer. To Regan, however, the purposeless infliction of pain is a positive joy. She has the petty lust of cruelty, the persecutor's satisfaction in seeing others suffer. Look how she eggs on Cornwall to punish Kent (II. 2. 128, 143) and torture Gloucester (III. 7. 31—33, 70). There is a sort of 'viciousness' about her, as of some ill-conditioned animal. One sees it too in her biting taunts. Ignorant of the characters of all three daughters, Lear is most ignorant of Regan's, believing that it is not in her "to bandy hasty words" (II. 4. 171); but this is just what she can do, and does[2]. Restless with much of her father's hysterical temperament and voluble, Regan speaks more[3] (and even more bitterly[4]) than Goneril, who keeps a cool head and acts.

[1] It has been noticed as significant of the difference between the sisters that Regan starts at the *thought* of Lear cursing her (II. 4. 164, 165), whereas Goneril actually heard his curse pronounced upon herself (I. 4. 270—284), and regarded it merely as "dotage."

[2] Cf. for instance her taunting reminders to her father that he is "old" (II. 4. 141) and "weak" (II. 4. 197), and that shockingly ungracious interruption, II. 4. 246.

[3] Note that Goneril's speech in the first scene (48—54) is briefer and more business-like than Regan's effusive profession (62—70).

[4] She has the power, says Coleridge, in a memorable phrase, of "casting more venom."

The struggle for Edmund proves decisively the superior strength of the elder. Regan is free (and so not guilty in the matter like her sister); she knows Goneril's partiality for Edmund; yet she merely "talks" with him (IV. 5. 30). Goneril in the same position would have brought things to a crisis; just as, when foiled through circumstances, she determines that her rival shall not succeed and sticks at nothing to compass her object. Similarly situated, Regan, one feels, would not have had the nerve to poison her sister, still less herself. The manner of their several ends is a measure of the difference between them. Finally, it may be noted that Goneril has acted all along against her husband's wish, whereas Regan has had the encouragement of her worthy mate Cornwall. There can be no doubt therefore that the elder is by far the more dangerous and guiltier; yet the weaker seems somehow the more odious—perhaps because weaker.

Albany.

The two Dukes are contrasted no less than their wives. Albany[1] seems in some ways like what Gloucester must have been. He is naturally kind, merciful, just. He is at first as "guiltless...as ignorant" (I. 4. 268) of his wife's treatment of Lear, and afterwards when he perceives her drift protests, though feebly; nor is he present, we must

[1] *Duke of Albany.* This title was created in 1398 and conferred by Robert III. of Scotland on his brother Robert, afterwards the celebrated Regent. Amongst those who have held it is Lord Darnley. He was made Duke of Albany a few days before his marriage with Mary Queen of Scots, and thenceforth the title was commonly a royal title held by some Prince of the Blood. Thus in 1881 it was revived in favour of Queen Victoria's youngest son, the late Prince Leopold. (Burke's *Peerage*, cii.)

Albania or *Albany* was an old name of Scotland (cf. *Breadalbane*), supposed to be derived from *Albanactus*, the youngest son of Brutus. king of Britain. Cf. *The Faerie Queene*, II. 10. 14:

> "But Albanacte had all the Northerne part [i.e. of Britain],
> Which of himselfe Albania he did call";

and the pseudo-Shakespearian play *Locrine*, where "Albanact" is one of the characters and addresses his warriors as "Brave cavaliers, princes of Albany" (II. 3. 1).

remember, when the king is maddened into leaving Gloucester's castle. He intends, as Edmund foresees (v. 1. 63, 64), to treat his prisoners generously (v. 3. 42—46). He would resign (v. 3. 299—301) to Lear the throne of which his victory has made him undisputed master. He has not that moral callousness which makes some of the other characters altogether indifferent to the "judgment of the heavens," or the sufferings of others. But Albany's good qualities are of the passive type. He hesitates and vacillates (v. 1. 3, 4); effaces himself and suffers his better instincts to be over-ruled. He shows at his weakest in the scene (i. 4. 307—344) where, though disapproving of Goneril's action, he has not resolution enough to press his resistance[1]. His wife treats him contemptuously, underrating his spirit and capacity, until he is "changed" (iv. 2. 3) and goaded into rebuking her. Then, as is often the case with the long-suffering, he astonishes by his vigour, and thenceforth, as the drift of events makes in his favour, he rises more to the height of his responsibility and in our esteem. But had he asserted himself sooner the course of events might have been very different, and one can scarcely apply to him the epithet 'noble,' though he almost appears so in contrast to those about him, more especially to his hateful colleague Cornwall[2]. The latter will be ever associated with the most horrible incident in Shakespeare. But independently of the impression left by his savagery in that scene (iii. 7), his character, though slightly developed,

Cornwall.

[1] "Observe Albany's passiveness, his *inertia*; he is not convinced, and yet he is afraid of looking into the thing. Such characters always yield to those who will take the trouble of governing them, or for them"—*Coleridge.* Still, the husband who should hold his own against a Goneril had need of an uncommon deal of force of character.

[2] *Duke of Cornwall.* William the Conqueror in 1068 bestowed almost all the county of Cornwall on his half-brother Robert, Comte de Mortein, and thus arose the earldom of Cornwall. "In 1336 the earldom was raised to a duchy by Edward III. in favour of his son, the Black Prince, and of his heirs, eldest sons of the kings of England. Since that time the Prince of Wales has always been duke of Cornwall" —*Encyclopædia Britannica.* Similarly the 'duchy of Lancaster' has been held by the Crown for centuries.

excites extreme disgust. He is a good illustration how vivid and actual one of the minor *dramatis personæ* can be made through a few strokes. For instance, his vile habit of heartless jesting (III. 7. 66, note) is in itself a revelation of meanness and malice and cruelty. He has not one redeeming merit, or hint of a merit, unlike even the "smiling rogue" Oswald, who is at least a loyal servant[1].

Gloucester.

Gloucester is kindly but easy-going and weak, and such people are apt to be inconsistent. He does not venture to plead on Cordelia's behalf, but shows some spirit in interceding for Kent with Cornwall (II. 2), and afterwards stays behind to say a kind word (though he does not know that the messenger is his old friend). He tries, kindly enough, to smooth matters between Lear and his daughter and Cornwall, and "would have all well" (II. 4. 115) between them. He sympathises with Lear when he is driven out of Gloucester's own castle, yet only raises a hesitating protest (II. 4. 296—298). Later, he assists Lear, but not till he has heard of the arrival of the French troops (III. 3); one feels that he does commiserate the king but cannot help doubting whether his commiseration would have taken this practical shape had it not been stimulated by fear lest the king should be "revenged home" (III. 3. 11). When his great affliction comes upon him he gives in altogether and seeks release in self-destruction. It is characteristic of the man who spoke so lightly in Scene I (8—17) that Gloucester regards his sufferings as a piece of cruel sport on the part of "the gods" (IV. 1. 37), and does not perceive any justification of them in his own conduct. His best quality is love of his sons. True, he misunderstands them as Lear does his children (an illustration of the parallelism of the two stories), accepting Edgar's guilt on slender evidence, and proving himself lamentably "credulous" (I. 2. 166) and easy to deceive, as might indeed be expected in a man so superstitious (I. 2. 97). Still, he is a devoted father, according to his lights; suffering, in the end, exercises on him as on his master its sovereign efficacy; and the beauty of his death might reconcile us to

[1] Cf. IV. 5. 22, note.

worse things than want of strenuousness. Indeed, nothing in his life (as we see it) becomes him so well as the leaving of it (v. 3. 197—200). He and Albany should have been born in "better years," when there is more scope for the milder virtues. In an "iron age" it is the weakness of such men that becomes prominent, and overshadows their good qualities.

Edmund.

Edmund's[1] villany has a kind of abstract interest as illustrating the consequences of the violation of moral law. The fact that he comes of a great house gives him, to borrow Coleridge's phrase, the "germ of pride." He bears on him the marks of a "valiant strain" (v. 3. 41); has a keen intellect and great resource and self-reliance, fostered by his peculiar life; is an able soldier and brave (v. 3); of attractive person, as might be inferred from the partiality of Goneril and Regan, apart from Kent's complimentary description (i. 1. 11, 12); and, spite of all his evil-doing, not without some instincts for good (v. 3. 244, 245). But these instincts have been repressed, and these possibilities of a worthy career marred, by one fatal flaw, his illegitimacy. A homeless outcast (i. 1. 25, 26), he has never known the good influences and associations among which Edgar has grown up; all the evil in him must have been fostered by his exiled up-bringing. He hears his own father lightly confess that he has often "blushed to acknowledge him (i. 1. 9)." "Custom" and the "curiosity of nations" (i. 2. 3, 4) are against him, and the thought that he cannot break his "birth's invidious bar" is ever present. Thus his natural gifts prove no blessings, for they inspire the pride which is ever being mortified, the ambition which can never be realised. Shame therefore (and shame "will naturally generate guilt") and pride make up the corroding poison, the "dram of evil," that turns whatever of good there may be in him "to his own scandal." He has come to regard himself as the natural enemy of society and all its ties and obligations, and his hand is against every man. There is in fact something

Influence of his position on his character.

[1] Edmund, though younger, recalls Iago. "There is in *King Lear* a good deal which sounds like an echo of *Othello*...the matter of a play [sometimes] seems to go on working in Shakespeare's mind and reappears, generally in a weaker form, in his next play"—*Bradley*.

impersonal about his wickedness. It is the "wild revenge" taken by the spirit of revolt against injustice. With Edgar's position and advantages he would not have been an Edgar, for he had not Edgar's natural goodness and nobility of character, but he would surely have been different from the Edmund we know. And in judging him we should remember the cause which *partially* accounts for what he is.

Kent.

Kent (the type of loyal devotion) reminds us somewhat of Gonzalo in *The Tempest*; less polished than the old Italian courtier, but stronger in character and equally philosophic and composed in endurance of adversity (II. 2. 148—166). He and Edgar represent the triumph of capable goodness over the intriguing super-subtlety (in Edmund) which over-reaches itself. The scheme of the play makes Edgar the counterpart[1] of Cordelia, and he is worthy of his position: what higher praise could be given? There is something very affecting in the tenderness with which his strong nature deals with his father's weakness. He is generous in his peculiar relation to Edmund, and the latter's taunt (II. 1. 67) is the very last that Edgar would use. His only practical mistakes are that, like Gloucester, he accepts too implicitly Edmund's story (I. 2), and afterwards (II. 1) takes to flight instead of seeking some explanation with his father. But he has no special reason to distrust Edmund, of whom he can know but little (I. 1. 25, 26), and his own nature "is so far from doing harms" (I. 2. 166—169) that he instinctively trusts others. Unsuspecting, undeserved confidence in others is the natural error of such men, and humanity is the richer therefor. After his flight Edgar manifests a nerve and versatility which carry him through many great difficulties and enable him (as Gervinus well brings out) to play many parts successfully. There is about him a "royal nobleness" of bearing and character to which none can be insensible (V. 3. 143, 144, 176, 177). Had he too fallen a victim at the last it would have been exceeding hard to dispute the alleged pessimism of *King Lear*.

Edgar.

[1] And he resembles her in his mingled strength and tenderness.

The Fool.

The Fool represents two characters familiar to the Elizabethans: the Court-Jester and the Fool or comic buffoon. The Jester was a kind of "professor of wit"; often a clever[1], educated man "of most excellent fancy[2]," like Yorick. He was admitted to a position of peculiar intimacy and freedom of speech, and enjoyed the perilous privilege of touching on his master's faults[3]. Tactful cleverness, naturally, was the condition on which he held his office. The comic buffoon was an inferior being, whose duty was rather to amuse by tricks and grotesque nonsense. The Fool in *Lear* fulfils two functions corresponding with his twofold character: he emphasises the tragedy of the events, and relieves it. He emphasises the tragedy because in his character as Jester (and it is his main character) he exposes, with something more than the freedom of speech usually accorded to his class, the folly of his master's action and its consequences. His aim seems to be to induce Lear to "resume" his power (I. 4. 304). Hence he harps continually on the folly of what Lear has done and expresses the regret to which his master is ashamed to give vent. For at first Lear tries to hide the truth from himself[4]; but the Fool, acting as the king's "conscience," forces the truth on his notice. All through the earlier part of the piece, pursuing this futile aim of urging the king to attempt to undo his work, the Fool puts into words what Lear himself is thinking, and those about him are thinking though afraid to say. Thus he keeps the tragedy of the king's position vividly present, and does this under the guise of a fantastic

More Jester than Fool.

Emphasises the tragedy.

[1] Thus the poet and dramatist John Heywood was Jester to Henry VIII. and Queen Mary; and the actor Tarleton to Queen Elizabeth. Slogan again, the famous Jester of the Court of Edward IV., was an Oxford man.

[2] See *Hamlet*, v. 1. 202—216.

[3] "An important privilege of the domestic and court fool was the freedom of speech which he could exercise upon his superiors"—with tact; *Shakespeare's England* (1916), II. 257.

[4] Cf. I. 4. 65—69 (referring to his treatment). Note too how he tries to find excuses for Regan and Cornwall, II. 4. 100—107).

levity[1] which relieves the tension by forcing us to smile, however pitiful the situation[2]. From the close of the second Act the note of his sallies changes. Lear's cause is irredeemably lost, his mind is tottering; and now the Fool seeks to divert his master—"to out-jest his heart-struck injuries" (III. 1. 16, 17). And in his jesting there is less of bitterness and cleverness, less of pungent allusion to the king's mistake and of satirical worldly wisdom masquerading as "folly"; and in their stead a wistful pathos that foreshadows the end, and a whimsical "innocent" babbling that again gives the relief of involuntary smiles. But Lear's "injuries" are beyond the Fool's power to alleviate, and he ceases to be necessary to the scheme of the play. No words of his are wanted to emphasise its self-evident tragedy—the king's madness is emphasis enough; nothing can relieve its sheer horror. So the Fool drops out of the action[3].

Relieves it.

The Fool differs greatly from the Clowns of the comedies. The conception of the part he plays is more truly dramatic. The jesting of the Clowns is an element in the comedy but not exactly of it, a thing apart, a diversion (in both senses): take Feste from *Twelfth Night* and though it would be the poorer for much that is delightful and amusing, yet it would not lose anything that

Contrasted with the Clowns of the comedies

[1] Cf. *As You Like It*, v. 4. 109—113:

"*Jaq.* Is not this [Touchstone] a rare fellow, my lord? he's as good at any thing and yet a fool.

Duke. He uses his folly like a stalking horse and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit."

[2] "The imagination is glad to take refuge in the half-comic, half-serious comments of the Fool, just as the mind under the extreme anguish of a surgical operation vents itself in sallies of wit"—*Hazlitt*.

This criticism, which expresses precisely what is meant by saying that the Fool "relieves" the tragedy, applies more to the three scenes (III. 2, 4, 6) where he is with Lear after they have left Gloucester's castle. For a striking illustration earlier in the play see II. 4. 116—121.

[3] To some extent (as Hazlitt says) his place is taken by the Bedlamite Edgar, to whom Lear's attention, as his madness increases, is drawn more and more away from the Fool (III. 4, 6).

one felt to be essential. But Lear without his Fool! His "folly" and pathos are of the very texture of the tragedy. Again, the characteristic of the Clowns is wit—boisterous in some, refined and intellectual in others and touched with the cynicism which kills pathos; but, for the most part, no more than a clever, superficial quibbling with ideas and words. But the Fool's jesting has wit and something beside; it trembles often on the verge of tears, like "sunshine and rain at once," and has in fact humour, twin brother of pathos. And then he really is, to some indefinable degree, an "innocent," though his "folly" has much of inspiration. In this respect too, in the strange pathos and mystery which belong to mental affliction, he is another being than Touchstone or Feste[1]. And altogether they are of coarser stuff than this frail, delicate creature, of an almost feminine[2] sensitiveness.

XII.

THE "PESSIMISM" OF "KING LEAR[3]."

"Pessimistic" is the word which rises instinctively to our lips when we ask ourselves what is the ultimate impression that this play makes. And "pessimistic" is a true description—up to a point, for the world of *King Lear* is one in which, more than in any other of Shakespeare's Tragedies, gross evil is rife and potent—goodness rare and outwardly unavailing. Nevertheless this impression of the play's pessimism is qualified by two vital considerations: (1) the victory of evil is temporary; and (2) the defeat of good leaves us with the feeling that there are worse things than this defeat, and that it is not the last word.

[1] Of the Clowns I thing that Feste, as we see him with the Duke, has most in common with the Fool.

[2] In Macready's revival of *King Lear* the part of the Fool was played by an actress (Furness, pp. 67, 68).

[3] Summarized partly from Professor Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1905), a work indispensable to all who would make an exhaustive study of Shakespeare's four greatest tragedies, and of the general principles of his dramatic art.

(1) Evil is shown to be "*merely* destructive"; nay more, *self*-destructive. The five characters who conspicuously embody evil come to a speedy and miserable end; in two of them we see how evil wages war on evil. "Good, in the widest sense, seems thus to be the principle of life and health in the world; evil, at least in these worst forms, to be a poison. The world reacts against it violently, and, in the struggle to expel it, is driven to devastate itself. If we ask why the world should generate that which convulses and wastes it, the tragedy gives no answer, and we are trying to go beyond tragedy in seeking one. But the world, in this tragic picture, *is* convulsed by evil, and rejects it."

(2) The second proposition, touching the littleness of the outward defeat of good, is less easily set forth in words. But all Shakespeare's pictures of tragic failure convey the same idea: that the real tragedy—the real defeat of good—would be if the character to whom our sympathies have gone out saved his life but lost his soul. If for instance Cordelia had *not* come to her father's rescue?...And so Shakespeare brings us back always to the paradox which is the only truth, that nothing material *can* touch the just man. And, since this is a hard truth for human nature's daily needs, he gives us too the comfort that what we see is only a part—"the broken arc" of the round which will yet be made perfect.

XIII.

A POET'S CRITICISM.

Every Age has its way of feeling and writing about Shakespeare. I fancy that to the young student of to-day there is something peculiarly sympathetic in Mr Masefield's little book. These passages[1] are part of his appreciation of *King Lear*:

"The evil which makes the action springs from two sources, both fatal. One is the blindness or fatuity in Lear, which makes him give away his strength and cast out Cordelia. The other, equally deadly, but more cruel in its results, springs

[1] Reproduced, by kind permission of the publishers, from Mr Masefield's *William Shakespeare* (a treasure-house of beautiful criticism) in the "Home University Library" (Williams and Norgate).

from an unrepented treachery, done long before by Gloucester, when he broke his marriage vows to beget Edmund..... One of the chief lessons of [Shakespeare's] plays is that man is only safe when his mind is perfectly just and calm. Any injustice, trouble or hunger in the mind delivers man to powers who restore calmness and justice by means violent or gentle according to the strength of the disturbing obsession. The play begins at the moment when an established blindness in two men is about to become an instrument of fate for the violent opening of their eyes. The blindness in both cases is against the course of nature. It is unnatural that Lear should give his kingship to women, and that he should curse his youngest child. It is unnatural that Gloucester should make much of a bastard son whom he has hardly seen for nine years. It is deeply unnatural that both Lear and Gloucester should believe evil suddenly of the youngest, best beloved, and most faithful spirits in the play. As the blindness that causes the injustice is great and unnatural, so the working of fate to purge the eyes and restore the balance is violent and unnatural. Every person important to the action is thrust into an unnatural way of life.....

The play is an excessive image of all that was most constant in Shakespeare's mind. Being an excessive image, it contains matter nowhere else given. It is all schemed and controlled with a power that he shows in no other play, not even in *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Many images, such as the blasted oak, water in fury, servants insolent and servile, old honest men and young girls faithful to death, occur in other plays. That which each play added to the thought of the world is expressed in the single figure of some one caught in a net. Macbeth is a ruthless man so caught. Hamlet is a wise man so caught. Othello is a passionate and Antony a glorious man so caught. All are caught and all are powerless, and all are superb tragic inventions. King Lear is a grander, ironic invention, who hurts far more than any of these because he is a terribly strong man who is powerless. He is so strong that he cannot die. He is so strong that he nearly breaks the net, before the folds kill him."

KING LEAR

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LEAR, king of Britain.
KING OF FRANCE.
DUKE OF BURGUNDY.
DUKE OF CORNWALL.
DUKE OF ALBANY.
EARL OF KENT.
EARL OF GLOUCESTER.
EDGAR, son to Gloucester.
EDMUND, bastard son to Gloucester.
CURAN, a courtier.
Old Man, tenant to Gloucester.
Doctor
Fool.
OSWALD, steward to Goneril.
A Captain employed by Edmund.
Gentleman attendant on Cordelia.
A Herald.
Servants to Cornwall.

GONERIL,
REGAN,
CORDELIA,
} daughters to **Lear.**

Knights of Lear's train, Captains, Messengers, Soldiers, and Attendants.

SCENE—*Britain.*

KING LEAR.

ACT I.

SCENE I. King LEAR'S *palace.*

Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER, *and* EDMUND.

Kent. I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Gloucester. It did always seem so to us: but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for equalities are so weighed, that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

Kent. Is not this your son, my lord?

Gloucester. His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it. Do you smell a fault? 10

Kent. I cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

Gloucester. But I have a son, sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came something saucily into the world before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair, and he must bē acknowledged.—Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edmund. No, my lord.

Gloucester. My lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edmund. My services to your lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edmund. Sir, I shall study deserving.

Gloucester. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. [*Sennet within.*]—The king is coming.

Enter one bearing a coronet, LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, *and* Attendants.

Lear. Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

Gloucester. I shall, my liege.

[*Exeunt Gloucester and Edmund.*

Lear. Meantime we shall express our darker purpose.—
Give me the map there.—Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd crawl toward death.—Our son of Cornwall,
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answer'd.—Tell me, my daughters,—
Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,—
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,

Our eldest-born, speak first.

Goneril. Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er loved, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Cordelia. [*Aside*] What shall Cordelia do? Love, and be silent.

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual.—What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.

Regan. Sir, I am made
Of the self-same metal that my sister is,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short,—that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys,
Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

Cordelia. [*Aside*] Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's
More richer than my tongue.

Lear. To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom;
No less in space, validity, and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril.—Now, our joy,

Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interess'd; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cordelia. Nothing, my lord.

Lear. Nothing!

Cordelia. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

Cordelia. Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
According to my bond; nor more nor less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia! mend your speech a little,
Lest it may mar your fortunes.

Cordelia. Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

Lear. But goes thy heart with this?

Cordelia. Ay, good my lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cordelia. So young, my lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so; thy truth, then, be thy dower:
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate, and the night;
By all the operation of the orbs
From whom we do exist, and cease to be;
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,

Propinquity and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee, from this, for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied, and relieved,
As thou my sometime daughter.
Kent. Good my liege,—
Lear. Peace, Kent!
Come not between the dragon and his wrath.—
I loved her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery.—Hence, and avoid my sight!
So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her!—Call France; who stirs?
Call Burgundy.—Cornwall and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest this third:
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.
I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name, and all the additions to a king;
The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part between you. [*Giving the crown.*
Kent. Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Loved as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers,—
Lear. The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft.
Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade

The region of my heart: be Kent unmannerly,
When Lear is mad. What wouldst thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak,
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound,
When majesty stoops to folly. Reverse thy doom;
And, in thy best consideration, check
This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight!

Kent. See better, Lear; and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.

Lear. Now, by Apollo,—

Kent. Now, by Apollo, king,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.

Lear. O, vassal! miscreant!

[*Laying his hand on his sword.*

Albany, Cornwall. Dear sir, forbear.

Kent. Do;
Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy doom;
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.

Lear. Hear me, recreant!
On thine allegiance, hear me!
Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,
Which we durst never yet, and with strain'd pride

To come between our sentence and our power,
Which nor our nature nor our place can bear,
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee, for provision
To shield thee from diseases of the world;
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away! by Jupiter,
This shall not be revoked.

Kent. Fare thee well, king: sith thus thou wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.—
[*To Cordelia*] The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
That justly think'st, and hast most rightly said!—
[*To Regan and Goneril*] And your large speeches may your deeds approve,
That good effects may spring from words of love.—
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;
He'll shape his old course in a country new. [*Exit.*

Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER, *with* FRANCE, BURGUNDY, *and* Attendants.

Glou. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble lord.

Lear. My lord of Burgundy,
We first address towards you, who with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter: what, in the least,
Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?

Burgundy. Most royal majesty,
I crave no more than hath your highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.

Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us, we did hold her so;

But now her price is fall'n. Sir, there she stands:
If aught within that little seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure pieced,
And nothing more, may fitly like your grace,
She's there, and she is yours.

Burgundy. I know no answer.

Lear. Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse, and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?

Burgundy. Pardon me, royal sir;
Election makes not up on such conditions.

Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made me,
I tell you all her wealth.—[*To France*] For you, great king,
I would not from your love make such a stray,
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
To avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom nature is ashamed
Almost to acknowledge hers.

France. This is most strange,
That she, that even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
Most best, most dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favour. Sure, her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree,
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fall'n into taint: which to believe of her,
Must be a faith that reason without miracle
Should never plant in me.

Cordelia. I yet beseech your majesty,—
If for I want that glib and oily art,

To speak and purpose not; since what I well intend,
I'll do't before I speak,—that you make known
It is no vicious blot, murder, or foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath deprived me of your grace and favour;
But even for want of that for which I am richer,—
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
As I am glad I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. Better thou
Hadst not been born than not to have pleased me better.

France. Is it but this,—a tardiness in nature
Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do?—My lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love's not love
When it is mingled with regards that stand
Aloof from the entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Burgundy. Royal Lear,
Give but that portion which yourself proposed,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Burgundy. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father
That you must lose a husband.

Cordelia. Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respects of fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect

My love should kindle to inflamed respect.—
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:
Thou losest here, a better where to find.

Lear. Thou hast her, France: let her be thine; for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again. Therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.—
Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish. Exeunt Lear, Burgundy, Cornwall, Albany, Gloucester, and Attendants.*

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cordelia. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are;
And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults as they are named. Love well our father:
To your professed bosoms I commit him:
But yet, alas, stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So, farewell to you both.

Regan. Prescribe not us our duties.

Goneril. Let your study
Be to content your lord, who hath received you
At fortune's alms. You have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

Cordelia. Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides:
Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper!

France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt France and Cordelia.*

Goneril. Sister, it is not little I have to say of what most nearly appertains to us both. I think our father will hence to-night.

Regan. That's most certain, and with you; next month with us.

Goneril. You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little: he always loved our sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

Regan. 'Tis the infirmity of his age: yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

Goneril. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must we look to receive from his age, not alone the imperfections of long-ingrafted condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Regan. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

Goneril. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let us hit together: if our father carry authority with such dispositions as he bears, this last surrender of his will but offend us.

Regan. We shall further think of it.

Goneril. We must do something, and i' the heat.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The* Earl of GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

Enter EDMUND, *with a letter.*

Edmund. Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit

The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy?—Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate: fine word,—legitimate!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOUCESTER.

Gloucester. Kent banish'd thus! and France in choler parted!
And the king gone to-night! subscribed his power!
Confined to exhibition! All this done
Upon the gad!—Edmund, how now! what news?

Edmund. So please your lordship, none.
[*Putting up the letter.*

Glou. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

Edmund. I know no news, my lord.

Gloucester. What paper were you reading?

Edmund. Nothing, my lord.

Gloucester. No? What needed, then, that terrible dispatch of it into your pocket? the quality of nothing hath not such need to hide itself. Let's see: come, if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

Edmund. I beseech you, sir, pardon me: it is a letter from my brother, that I have not all o'er-read; and for

so much as I have perused, I find it not fit for your o'erlooking.

Gloucester. Give me the letter, sir.

Edmund. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Gloucester. Let's see, let's see.

Edmund. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Gloucester. [*Reads*] "This policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness cannot relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of aged tyranny; who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffered. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, EDGAR."

Hum—conspiracy!—"Sleep till I waked him, you should enjoy half his revenue,"—My son Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in?—When came this to you? who brought it?

Edmund. It was not brought me, my lord; there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in at the casement of my closet.

Glou. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edmund. If the matter were good, my lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

Gloucester. It is his.

Edmund. It is his hand, my lord; but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

Gloucester. Has he never before sounded you in this business?

Edmund. Never, my lord: but I have heard him oft maintain it to be fit, that, sons at perfect age, and fathers declining, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue. 69

Gloucester. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish!—Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him: abominable villain! Where is he?

Edmund. I do not well know, my lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testimony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no other pretence of danger.

Gloucester. Think you so?

Edmund. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Gloucester. He cannot be such a monster—

Edmund. Nor is not, sure. 89

Gloucester. To his father, that so tenderly and entirely loves him.—Heaven and earth!—Edmund, seek him out; wind me into him, I pray you: frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself, to be in a due resolution.

Edm. I will seek him, sir, presently; convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Gloucester. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of nature can

reason it thus and thus, yet nature finds itself scourged by the sequent effects: love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide: in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond cracked 'twixt son and father. This villain of mine comes under the prediction; there's son against father: the king falls from bias of nature; there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery, and all ruinous disorders, follow us disquietly to our graves.—Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully.—And the noble and true-hearted Kent banished! his offence, honesty! 'Tis strange. [*Exit.* 110

Edmund. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behaviour,—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers, by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on: an admirable evasion of man, to lay his disposition to the charge of a star! Tut, I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my birth. Edgar—

Enter EDGAR.

and pat he comes like the catastrophe of the old comedy. my cue is villanous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom o' Bedlam. O, these eclipses do portend these divisions! fa, sol, la, mi.

Edgar. How now, brother Edmund! what serious contemplation are you in?

Edmund. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edgar. Do you busy yourself with that?

Edmund. I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed unhappily; as of unnaturalness between the child and the parent; death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state, menaces and maledictions against king and nobles; needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edgar. How long have you been a sectary astronomical?

Edmund. Come, come; when saw you my father last?

Edgar. The night gone by.

Edmund. Spake you with him?

Edgar. Ay, two hours together.

Edmund. Parted you in good terms? Found you no displeasure in him by word nor countenance?

Edgar. None at all.

Edmund. Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him: and at my entreaty forbear his presence till some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure; which at this instant so rageth in him, that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edgar. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edmund. That's my fear. I pray you, have a continent forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower; and, as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my lord speak: pray ye, go; there's my key: if you do stir abroad, go armed.

Edgar. Armed, brother!

Edmund. Brother, I advise you to the best; I am no honest man if there be any good meaning toward you: I have told you what I have seen and heard but

faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it: pray you, away.

Edgar. Shall I hear from you anon?

Edm. I do serve you in this business. [*Exit Edgar.*
A credulous father! and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy! I see the business.
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit. [*Exit.*

SCENE III. *The* Duke of ALBANY'S *palace.*

Enter GONERIL *and* OSWALD.

Goneril. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his fool?

Oswald. Ay, madam.

Gon. By day and night, he wrongs me; every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other,
That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle. When he returns from hunting,
I will not speak with him; say I am sick:
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.
[*Horns within.*

Oswald. He's coming, madam; I hear him.

Goneril. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question:
If he distaste it, let him to my sister,
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,

Not to be over-ruled. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away! Now, by my life,
Old fools are babes again; and must be used
With checks as flatteries,—when they are seen abused.
Remember what I have said.

Oswald. Very well, madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among you;
What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
That I may speak: I'll write straight to my sister,
To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *A hall in the same.*

Enter KENT, *disguised.*

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I razed my likeness. Now, banish'd Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lovest,
Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights, *and* Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go get it ready. [*Exit an Attendant.*] How now! what art thou?

Kent. A man, sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? What wouldst thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly that will put me in trust; to love him

that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I cannot choose; and to eat no fish.

Lear. What art thou?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the king.

Lear. If thou be as poor for a subject as he is for a king, thou art poor enough. What wouldst thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who wouldst thou serve?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly: that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in; and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old art thou?

Kent. Not so young, sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for any thing: I have years on my back forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shalt serve me: if I like thee no worse after dinner, I will not part from thee yet.—Dinner, ho, dinner!—Where's my knave? my fool?—Go you, and call my fool hither. [*Exit an Attendant.*

Enter OSWALD.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Oswald. So please you,— [*Exit.*

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back. [*Exit a Knight*]—Where's my fool, ho?—I think the world's asleep.

Re-enter Knight.

How now! where's that mongrel? 49

Knight. He says, my lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me when I called him?

Knight. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not!

Knight. My lord, I know not what the matter is; but, to my judgment, your highness is not entertained with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general dependants as in the duke himself also and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! sayest thou so? 61

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty cannot be silent when I think your highness wronged.

Lear. Thou but rememberest me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness: I will look further into't. But where's my fool? I have not seen him this two days. 70

Knight. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away.

Lear. No more of that; I have noted it well.—Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her. [*Exit an Attendant.*]—Go you, call hither my fool. [*Exit an Attendant.*

Re-enter OSWALD.

O, you sir, you, come you hither, sir: who am I, sir?

Oswald. My lady's father.

Lear. "My lady's father"! my lord's knave: you dog! you slave! you cur!

Oswald. I am none of these, my lord; I beseech your pardon.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

[*Striking him.*

Oswald. I'll not be struck, my lord.

Kent. Nor tripped neither, you base football player.

[*Tripping up his heels.*

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou servest me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences: away, away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry: but away! go to; have you wisdom? so.

[*Pushes Oswald out.*

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service. [*Giving Kent money.*

Enter Fool.

Fool. Let me hire him too:—here's my coxcomb.

[*Offering Kent his cap.*

Lear. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. Why, for taking one's part that's out of favour: nay, an thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb: why, this fellow has banished two on's daughters, and did the third a blessing against his will; if thou follow him, thou must

needs wear my coxcomb.—How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

Lear. Why, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah; the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipped out, when Lady the brach may stand by the fire and stink.

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, nuncle;

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest;
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

Kent. This is nothing, fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for't.—Can you make no use of nothing, nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. [*To Kent*] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to: he will not believe a fool.

Lear. A bitter fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet fool?

Lear. No, lad, teach me.

Fool. That lord that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me,—
Do thou for him stand;
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my lord.

Fool. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me; if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't: and ladies too, they will not let me have all fool to myself; they'll be snatching.—Give me an egg, nuncle, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' the middle, and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest thy crown i' the middle, and gavest away both parts, thou borest thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown, when thou gavest thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipped that first finds it so.

[*Singing*] Fools had ne'er less grace in a year;
For wise men are grown foppish,
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Fool. I have used it, nuncle, e'er since thou madest

thy daughters thy mother: for when thou gavest them the rod, and put'st down thy own breeches,

[*Singing*] Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.

Prithee, nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipped.

Fool. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipped for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipped for lying; and sometimes I am whipped for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool: and yet I would not be thee, nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing i' the middle:—here comes one o' the parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? Methinks you are too much of late i' the frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure: I am better than thou art now; I am a fool, thou art nothing.—[*To Gon.*] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum,

He that keeps nor crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some.—

That's a shealed peascod. [*Pointing to Lear.*

Goneril. Not only, sir, this your all-licensed fool,
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel; breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,

I had thought, by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance; which if you should, the fault
Would not scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For, you know, nuncle,
The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo so long,
That it had it head bit off by it young.
So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Goneril. Come, sir,
I would you would make use of that good wisdom
Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away
These dispositions, that of late transform you
From what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when the cart draws the horse?—Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

Lear. Doth any here know me? Why, this is not Lear:
Doth Lear walk thus? speak thus? Where are his eyes?
Either his notion weakens, or his discernings
Are lethargied—Ha! waking? 'tis not so.
Who is it that can tell me who I am?

Fool. Lear's shadow.

Lear. I would learn that; for, by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge, and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father.

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Goneril. This admiration, sir, is much o' the savour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd, and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a graced palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy: be, then, desired
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
Which know themselves and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils!—
Saddle my horses; call my train together.—
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee:
Yet have I left a daughter.

Gon. You strike my people; and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY.

Lear. Woe, that too late repents,—[*To Albany*] O,
sir, are you come?
Is it your will? Speak, sir.—Prepare my horses.—
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster!

Albany. Pray, sir, be patient.

Lear. [*To Goneril*] Detested kite! thou liest:
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,

That all particulars of duty know,
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name.—O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in, [*Striking his head.*
And thy dear judgment out!—Go, go, my people.

Albany. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath moved you.

Lear. It may be so, my lord.—
Hear, nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase:
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen; that it may live,
And be a thwart disnatured torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!—Away, away! [*Exit.*

Albany. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

Goneril. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
But let his disposition have that scope
That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR.

Lear. What, fifty of my followers at a clap!

Within a fortnight?

Albany. What's the matter, sir?

Lear. I'll tell thee: [*To Gon.*] Life and death! I am ashamed
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!
The untented woundings of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,
Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,
And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
To temper clay. Yea, is it come to this?
Let it be so: yet have I left a daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
I have cast off for ever; thou shalt, I warrant thee.
[*Exeunt Lear, Kent, and Attendants*

Goneril. Do you mark that, my lord?

Albany. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you,—

Goneril. Pray you, content.—What, Oswald, ho!—
[*To the Fool.*] You, sir, more knave than fool, after your master.

Fool. Nuncle Lear, nuncle Lear, tarry, and take the fool with thee.

A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter:
So the fool follows after. [*Exit.*

Goneril. This man hath had good counsel:—a hundred knights!

'Tis politic and safe to let him keep
At point a hundred knights: yes, that on every dream,
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy.—Oswald, I say!

Albany. Well, you may fear too far.

Goneril. Safer than trust too far:
Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken: I know his heart.
What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister:
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
When I have show'd the unfitness,—

Re-enter OSWALD.

How now, Oswald!
What, have you writ that letter to my sister?

Oswald. Ay, madam.

Goneril. Take you some company, and away to horse:
Inform her full of my particular fear;
And thereto add such reasons of your own
As may compact it more. Get you gone;
And hasten your return. [*Exit Oswald*] No, no, my lord,
This milky gentleness and course of yours
Though I condemn not, yet, under pardon,
You are much more attask'd for want of wisdom
Than praised for harmful mildness.

Albany. How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell:
Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

Goneril. Nay, then—

Albany. Well, well; the event. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *Court before the same.*

Enter LEAR, KENT, *and* FOOL.

Lear. Go you before to Gloucester with these letters. Acquaint my daughter no further with any thing you know than comes from her demand out of the letter. If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you.

Kent. I will not sleep, my lord, till I have delivered your letter. [*Exit.*

Fool. If a man's brains were in's heels, were't not in danger of kibes?

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I prithee, be merry; thy wit shall ne'er go slipshod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool. Shalt see thy other daughter will use thee kindly; for though she's as like this as a crab's like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. What canst tell, boy?

Fool. She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' the middle on's face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose; that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

Lear. I did her wrong—

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put his head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature.—So kind a father!—Be my horses ready?

Fool. Thy asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: thou wouldst make a good fool.

Lear. To take't again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O, let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven! Keep me in temper: I would not be mad!

Enter Gentleman.

How now! are the horses ready?

Gentleman. Ready, my lord.

Lear. Come, boy.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A court within the castle of the* Earl of GLOUCESTER.

Enter EDMUND *and* CURAN, *meeting.*

Edmund. Save thee, Curan.

Curan. And you, sir. I have been with your father, and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan his duchess will be here with him this night.

Edmund. How comes that?

Curan. Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad; I mean the whispered ones, for they are yet but ear-kissing arguments?

Edmund. Not I: pray you, what are they?

Curan. Have you heard of no likely wars toward 'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany?

Edmund. Not a word.

Curan. You may do, then, in time. Fare you well, sir. [*Exit.*

Edm. The duke be here to-night? The better! best!
This weaves itself perforce into my business.
My father hath set guard to take my brother:
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,
Which I must act: briefness and fortune, work!—
Brother, a word; descend: brother, I say!

Enter EDGAR.

My father watches: O sir, fly this place;
Intelligence is given where you are hid;
You have now the good advantage of the night:

Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall?
He's coming hither; now, i' the night, i' the haste,
And Regan with him: have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany?
Advise yourself.

Edgar. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edmund. I hear my father coming: pardon me;
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you:
Draw: seem to defend yourself: now quit you well.
Yield: come before my father.—Light, ho, here!
Fly, brother.—Torches, torches!—So, farewell. [*Exit Edgar.*
Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion
[*Wounds his arm.*
Of my more fierce endeavour: I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport.—Father, father!—
Stop, stop!—No help?

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants *with torches.*

Gloucester. Now, Edmund, where's the villain?

Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand auspicious mistress,—

Gloucester. But where is he?

Edm. Look, sir, I bleed.

Gloucester. Where is the villain, Edmund?

Edm. Fled this way, sir. When by no means he could—

Glou. Pursue him, ho!—Go after. [*Exeunt some Servants.*]
—By no means what?

Edmund. Persuade me to the murder of your lordship;
But that I told him the revenging gods
'Gainst parricides did all their thunders bend;
Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to the father;—sir, in fine,

Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,
With his prepared sword he charges home
My unprovided body, lanced mine arm:
But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits,
Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to the encounter,
Or whether gasted by the noise I made,
Full suddenly he fled.

Gloucester. Let him fly far:
Not in this land shall he remain uncaught:
And found—dispatch. The noble duke my master,
My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night:
By his authority I will proclaim it,
That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks,
Bringing the murderous caitiff to the stake;
He that conceals him, death.

Edmund. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech
I threaten'd to discover him: he replied,
"Thou unpossessing bastard! dost thou think,
If I would stand against thee, would the reposal
Of any trust, virtue, or worth, in thee
Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should deny,—
As this I would; ay, though thou didst produce
My very character,—I'd turn it all
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice:
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it."

Gloucester. Strong and fasten'd villain!
Would he deny his letter? I never got him.—

[*Tucket within.*

Hark, the duke's trumpets! I know not why he comes.—
All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not scape;
The duke must grant me that: besides, his picture
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
May have due note of him; and of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend! since I came hither,—
Which I can call but now,—I have heard strange news.
Regan. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short
Which can pursue the offender. How dost, my lord?
Glou. O madam, my old heart is crack'd,—it's crack'd!
Regan. What, did my father's godson seek your life?
He whom my father named? your Edgar?
Gloucester. O lady, lady, shame would have it hid!
Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights
That tend upon my father?
Gloucester. I know not, madam:—'tis too bad, too bad.
Edmund. Yes, madam, he was of that consort.
Reg. No marvel, then, though he were ill affected:
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have the expense and waste of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well inform'd of them; and with such cautions,
That if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.
Cornwall. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.—
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A child-like office.
Edmund. 'Twas my duty, sir.
Gloucester. He did bewray his practice: and received

This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Cornwall. Is he pursued?

Gloucester. Ay, my good lord.

Cornwall. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm: make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please.—For you, Edmund,
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours:
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need;
You we first seize on.

Edmund. I shall serve you, sir,
Truly, however else.

Gloucester. For him I thank your grace.

Corn. You know not why we came to visit you,—

Reg. Thus out of season, threading dark-eyed night:
Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise,
Wherein we must have use of your advice:
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home; the several messengers
From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,
Lay comforts to your bosom, and bestow
Your needful counsel to our business,
Which craves the instant use.

Gloucester. I serve you, madam:
Your graces are right welcome. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Before* GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

Enter KENT *and* OSWALD, *severally.*

Osw. Good dawning to thee, friend: art of this house?

Kent. Ay.

Oswald. Where may we set our horses?

Kent. I' the mire.

Oswald. Prithee, if thou lovest me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Oswald. Why, then, I care not for thee.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make thee care for me.

Osw. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Oswald. What dost thou know me for?

Kent. A knave; a rascal; an eater of broken meats; a base, proud, shallow, beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave; a lily-livered, action-taking, glass-gazing, superserviceable, finical rogue; one-trunk-inheriting slave; one that art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, and the son and heir of a mongrel: one whom I will beat into clamorous whining, if thou deniest the least syllable of thy addition.

Oswald. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee!

Kent. What a brazen-faced varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me! Is it two days since I tripped up thy heels, and beat thee, before the king? Draw, you rogue: for, though it be night, yet the moon shines; I'll make a sop o' the moonshine of you: draw, you cullionly barber-monger, draw. [*Drawing his sword.*

Oswald. Away! I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal: you come with letters against the king; and take Vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father: draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks: draw, you rascal; come your ways.

Oswald. Help, ho! murder! help!

Kent. Strike, you slave; stand, rogue, stand; you neat slave, strike. [*Beating him.*

Oswald. Help, ho! murder! murder!

Enter EDMUND, *with his rapier drawn.*

Edm. How now! What's the matter? [*Parting them.*

Kent. With you, goodman boy, an you please: come, I'll flesh ye; come on, young master.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants.

Glou. Weapons! arms! What's the matter here?

Cornwall. Keep peace, upon your lives;
He dies that strikes again. What is the matter?

Regan. The messengers from our sister and the king.

Cornwall. What is your difference? speak.

Oswald. I am scarce in breath, my lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirred your valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee: a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art a strange fellow: a tailor make a man?

Kent. Ay, a tailor, sir: a stone-cutter or a painter could not have made him so ill, though they had been but two hours o' the trade.

Cornwall. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel?

Oswald. This ancient ruffian, sir, whose life I have spared at suit of his gray beard,—

Kent. Thou zed! thou unnecessary letter!—My lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the wall with him.—"Spare my gray beard," you wagtail?

Cornwall. Peace, sirrah!
You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, sir; but anger hath a privilege.

Cornwall. Why art thou angry?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,

Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain
Which are too intrinse to unloose; smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebel;
Bring oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
Knowing naught, like dogs, but following.—
A plague upon your epileptic visage!
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?
Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

Cornwall. What, art thou mad, old fellow?

Gloucester. How fell you out? say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy
Than I and such a knave.

Cornwall. Why dost thou call him knave? What's his offence?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, nor his, nor hers.

Kent. Sir, 'tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Cornwall. This is some fellow,
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he,—
An honest mind and plain,—he must speak truth!
An they will take it, so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly ducking observants

That stretch their duties nicely.

Kent. Sir, in good faith, in sincere verity,
Under the allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flickering Phœbus' front,—

Cornwall. What mean'st by this?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, sir, I am no flatterer: he that beguiled you in a plain accent was a plain knave; which, for my part, I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to't.

Cornwall. What was the offence you gave him?

Oswald. I never gave him any:
It pleased the king his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction;
When he, conjunct, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind; being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthied him, got praises of the king
For him attempting who was self-subdued;
And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here again.

Kent. None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajax is their fool.

Cornwall. Fetch forth the stocks!—
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you—

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn:
Call not your stocks for me: I serve the king;
On whose employment I was sent to you:
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks! As I have life and honour,
There shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon! till night, my lord; and all night too.

Kent. Why, madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

Regan. Sir, being his knave, I will.

Cornwall. This is a fellow of the self-same colour
Our sister speaks of.—Come, bring away the stocks!

[*Stocks brought out.*

Gloucester. Let me beseech your grace not to do so:
His fault is much, and the good king his master
Will check him for't: your purposed low correction
Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches
For pilferings and most common trespasses
Are punish'd with: the king must take it ill,
That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrain'd.

Cornwall. I'll answer that.

Regan. My sister may receive it much more worse,
To have her gentleman abused, assaulted,
For following her affairs.—Put in his legs.—

[*Kent is put in the stocks.*

Come, my good lord, away.

[*Exeunt all except Glou. and Kent.*

Glou. I am sorry for thee, friend; 'tis the duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd nor stopp'd: I'll entreat for thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, sir: I have watch'd, and travell'd hard;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:
Give you good morrow!

Glou. The duke's to blame in this; 'twill be ill taken.

[*Exit.*

Kent. Good king, that must approve the common saw,
Thou out of heaven's benediction comest
To the warm sun!
Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter! Nothing almost sees miracles
But misery: I know 'tis from Cordelia,
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course; and shall find time
From this enormous state, seeking to give
Losses their remedies. All weary and o'er-watch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night: smile once more; turn thy wheel!
[*Sleeps.*

SCENE III. *The open country.*

Enter EDGAR.

Edgar. I heard myself proclaim'd;
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escaped the hunt. No port is free; no place,
That guard, and most unusual vigilance,
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may scape,
I will preserve myself: and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast: my face I'll grime with filth;
Blanket my loins; elf all my hair in knots;
And with presented nakedness out-face
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent

Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!
That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *Before* GLOUCESTER'S *castle;* KENT *in the stocks.*

Enter LEAR, Fool, *and* Gentleman.

Lear. 'Tis strange that they should so depart from home,
And not send back my messenger.
Gentleman. As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.
Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!
Lear. Ha!
Makest thou this shame thy pastime?
Kent. No, my lord.
Fool. Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied by the head, dogs and bears by the neck, monkeys by the loins, and men by the legs: when a man's over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks.
Lear. What's he that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?
Kent. It is both he and she,
Your son and daughter.
Lear. No.
Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.
Kent. I say, yea.
Lear. No, no, they would not.
Kent. Yes, they have.
Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.
Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.
Lear. They durst not do't;
They could not, would not do't; 'tis worse than murder,
To do upon respect such violent outrage:
Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way
Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.
Kent. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations;
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,
Which presently they read: on whose contents,
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse;
Commanded me to follow, and attend
The leisure of their answer; gave me cold looks:
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome, I perceived, had poison'd mine—
Being the very fellow that of late
Display'd so saucily against your highness,—
Having more man than wit about me, drew:
He raised the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.
Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way.

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind;
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind.

But, for all this, thou shalt have as many dolours for thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

Lear. O, how this mother swells up toward my heart! *Hysterica passio*, down, thou climbing sorrow,
Thy element's below!—Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear. Follow me not;
Stay here. [*Exit.*

Gent. Made you no more offence but what you speak of?

Kent. None.
How chance the king comes with so small a train?

Fool. An thou hadst been set i' the stocks for that question, thou hadst well deserved it.

Kent. Why, fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring i' the winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men; and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following it; but the great one that goes up the hill, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again: I would have none but knaves follow it, since a fool gives it.

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry; the fool will stay,
And let the wise man fly:

The knave turns fool that runs away:
The fool no knave, perdy.

Kent. Where learned you this, fool?

Fool. Not i' the stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR *with* GLOUCESTER.

Lear. Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?
They have travell'd all the night? Mere fetches;
The images of revolt and flying-off.
Fetch me a better answer.

Gloucester. My dear lord,
You know the fiery quality of the duke;
How unremovable and fix'd he is
In his own course.

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloucester, Gloucester,
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Glou. Well, my good lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

Gloucester. Ay, my good lord.

Lear. The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear father
Would with his daughter speak, commands her service:
Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!
Fiery? the fiery duke? Tell the hot duke that—
No, but not yet: may be he is not well:
Infirmity doth still neglect all office
Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves
When nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind
To suffer with the body: I'll forbear;
And am fall'n out with my more headier will,
To take the indisposed and sickly fit

For the sound man.—Death on my state! wherefore
[*Looking on Kent.*
Should he sit here? This act persuades me
That this remotion of the duke and her
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the duke and 's wife I'd speak with them,
Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

Gloucester. I would have all well betwixt you. [*Exit.*

Lear. O me, my heart, my rising heart! but, down!

Fool. Cry to it, nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels when she put 'em i' the paste alive; she knapped 'em o' the coxcombs with a stick, and cried, "Down, wantons, down!" 'Twas her brother that, in pure kindness to his horse, buttered his hay.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants.

Lear. Good morrow to you both.

Cornwall. Hail to your grace!
[*Kent is set at liberty.*

Regan. I am glad to see your highness.

Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason
I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
Sepulchring an adultress.—[*To Kent*] O, are you free?
Some other time for that.—Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught: O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here!
[*Points to his heart.*
I can scarce speak to thee; thou'lt not believe
With how depraved a quality—O Regan!

Regan. I pray you, sir, take patience: I have hope
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.
Lear. Say, how is that?
Regan. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation: if, sir, perchance
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As clears her from all blame.
Lear. My curses on her!
Regan. O, sir, you are old;
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine: you should be ruled and led
By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than you yourself. Therefore, I pray you,
That to our sister you do make return;
Say you have wrong'd her, sir.
Lear. Ask her forgiveness?
Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
"Dear daughter, I confess that I am old; [*Kneeling.*
Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food."
Regan. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks:
Return you to my sister.
Lear. [*Rising*] Never, Regan:
She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart:—
All the stored vengeances of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness!
Cornwall. Fie, sir, fie!
Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames

Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the powerful sun,
To fall and blast her pride!

Regan. O the blest gods! so will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse:
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness: her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort and not burn. 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And in conclusion to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in: thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;
Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

Regan. Good sir, to the purpose.

Lear. Who put my man i' the stocks? [*Tucket within.*

Cornwall. What trumpet's that?

Regan. I know't,—my sister's: this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.

Enter OSWALD.

Is your lady come?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.—
Out, varlet, from my sight!

Cornwall. What means your grace?

Lear. Who stock'd my servant? Regan, I have good hope
Thou didst not know on't.—Who comes here?

Enter GONERIL.

O heavens,
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause; send down, and take my part!—
[*To Goneril*] Art not ashamed to look upon this beard?—
O Regan, wilt thou take her by the hand?

Gon. Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?
All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

Lear. O sides, you are too tough;
Will you yet hold?—How came my man i' the stocks?

Cornwall. I set him there, sir: but his own disorders
Deserved much less advancement.

Lear. You! did you?

Regan. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me:
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her, and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' the air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,—
Necessity's sharp pinch!—Return with her?
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her?
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom. [*Pointing at Oswald.*

Goneril. At your choice, sir.

Lear. I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure:
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

Regan. Not altogether so:
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old, and so—
But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken?

Regan. I dare avouch it, sir: what, fifty followers?
Is it not well? What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my lord, receive attendance
From those that she calls servants or from mine?

Regan. Why not, my lord? If then they chanced to slack you,
We could control them. If you will come to me,—
For now I spy a danger,—I entreat you

To bring but five and twenty: to no more
Will I give place or notice.
Lear. I gave you all—
Regan. And in good time you gave it.
Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number. What, must I come to you
With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?
Regan. And speak't again, my lord; no more with me.
Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd,
When others are more wicked; not being the worst
Stands in some rank of praise. [*To Gon.*] I'll go with thee:
Thy fifty yet doth double five and twenty,
And thou art twice her love.
Goneril. Hear me, my lord:
What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?
Regan. What need one?
Lear. O, reason not the need: our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous:
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's: thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need,—
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!
If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,

Stain my man's cheeks!—No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall—I will do such things,—
What they are, yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep;
No, I'll not weep:
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep.—O fool, I shall go mad!

[*Exeunt Lear, Gloucester, Kent, and Fool.*
Storm heard at a distance.

Cornwall. Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm.

Regan. This house is little: the old man and his people
Cannot be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame; hath put himself from rest,
And must needs taste his folly.

Regan. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

Goneril. So am I purposed.
Where is my lord of Gloucester?

Cornwall. Follow'd the old man forth: he is return'd.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER.

Glou. The king is in high rage.

Cornwall. Whither is he going?

Glou. He calls to horse; but will I know not whither.

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way; he leads himself.

Goneril. My lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

Glou. Alack, the night comes on, and the bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush.

Regan. O, sir, to wilful men
The injuries that they themselves procure

Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors:
He is attended with a desperate train;
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abused, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night:
My Regan counsels well: come out o' the storm.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *A heath.*

A storm, with thunder and lightning. Enter KENT *and a* Gentleman, *meeting.*

Kent. Who's there, besides foul weather?

Gent. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you. Where's the king?

Gentleman. Contending with the fretful elements;
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,
That things might change or cease; tears his white hair,
Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;
Strives in his little world of man to out-scorn
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch,
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.

Kent. But who is with him?

Gent. None but the fool; who labours to out-jest
His heart-struck injuries.
Kent. Sir, I do know you;
And dare, upon the warrant of my note,
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;
Who have—as who have not, that their great stars
Throned and set high?—servants, who seem no less,
Which are to France the spies and speculations
Intelligent of our state; what hath been seen,
Either in snuffs and packings of the dukes,
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
Against the old kind king, or something deeper,
Whereof perchance these are but furnishings;—
But, true it is, from France there comes a power
Into this scatter'd kingdom; who already,
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet
In some of our best ports, and are at point
To show their open banner. Now to you:
If on my credit you dare build so far
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
Some that will thank you, making just report
Of how unnatural and bemadding sorrow
The king hath cause to plain.
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding;
And, from some knowledge and assurance, offer
This office to you.
Gent. I will talk further with you.
Kent. No, do not.
For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,—

As fear not but you shall,—show her this ring;
And she will tell you who your fellow is
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm!
I will go seek the king.

Gent. Give me your hand: have you no more to say?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect, more than all yet;
That, when we have found the king,—in which your pain
That way, I'll this,—he that first lights on him
Holla the other. [*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the heath. Storm still.*

Enter LEAR *and* Fool.

Lear. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
That make ingrateful man!

Fool. O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle, in, and ask thy daughters' blessing: here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription: then let fall

Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man:
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this! O! O! 'tis foul!

Fool. He that has a house to put's head in has a good head-piece.

The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make
Shall of a corn cry woe,
And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made mouths in a glass.

Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience; I will say nothing.

Enter KENT.

Kent. Who's there?

Fool. Marry, here's a wise man and a fool.

Kent. Alas, sir, are you here? things that love night
Love not such nights as these; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves: since I was man,
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard: man's nature cannot carry
The affliction nor the fear.

Lear. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pother o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice: hide thee, thou bloody hand;

Thou perjured, and thou simular man of virtue
That art incestuous: caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming
Hast practised on man's life: close pent-up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
More sinn'd against than sinning.

Kent. Alack, bare-headed!
Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest:
Repose you there; while I to this hard house—
More harder than the stones whereof 'tis raised;
Which even but now, demanding after you,
Denied me to come in—return, and force
Their scanted courtesy.

Lear. My wits begin to turn.—
Come on, my boy: how dost, my boy? art cold?
I am cold myself.—Where is this straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.—
Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool. [*Singing*]

He that has and a little tiny wit,—
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,—
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
For the rain it raineth every day.

Lear. True, my good boy.—Come, bring us to this hovel.
[*Exeunt Lear and Kent.*

Fool. This is a brave night! I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;

When nobles are their tailors' tutors;
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues;
Nor cutpurses come not to throngs;
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion:
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
That going shall be used with feet.
This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his time.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III. GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

Enter GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND.

Gloucester. Alack, alack, Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desired their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charged me, on pain of their perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, nor any way sustain him.

Edmund. Most savage and unnatural!

Gloucester. Go to; say you nothing. There's a division between the dukes; and a worse matter than that: I have received a letter this night; 'tis dangerous to be spoken; I have locked the letter in my closet: these injuries the king now bears will be revenged home; there is part of a power already footed: we must incline to the king. I will seek him, and privily relieve him: go you, and maintain talk with the duke, that my charity be not of him perceived: if he ask for me, I am ill, and gone to bed. Though I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the king my old

master must be relieved. There is some strange thing toward, Edmund; pray you, be careful. [*Exit.*

Edmund. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the duke
Instantly know; and of that letter too:
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses,—no less than all:
The younger rises when the old doth fall. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *The heath. Before a hovel. Storm still.*

Enter LEAR, KENT, *and* Fool.

Kent. Here is the place, my lord; good my lord, enter:
The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure.

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart?

Kent. I had rather break mine own. Good my lord, enter.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear;
But if thy flight lay toward the roaring sea,
Thou'dst meet the bear i' the mouth. When the mind's free,
The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to't? But I will punish home:—
No, I will weep no more.—In such a night

To shut me out!—Pour on; I will endure:—
In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,—
O, that way madness lies; let me shun that;
No more of that.

Kent. Good my lord, enter here.

Lear. Prithee, go in thyself; seek thine own ease:
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.—
[*To the Fool*] In, boy; go first. You houseless poverty,
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.—
[*Fool goes in.*
Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these? O, I have ta'en
Too little care of this! Take physic, pomp;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just.

Edgar [*Within*] Fathom and half, fathom and half! Poor Tom! [*The Fool runs out from the hovel.*

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle, here's a spirit. Help me, help me!

Kent. Give me thy hand.—Who's there?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's poor Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i' the straw? Come forth.

Enter EDGAR *disguised as a madman.*

Edgar. Away! the foul fiend follows me!
Through the sharp hawthorn blows the cold wind.

Hum! go to thy cold bed, and warm thee.

Lear. Didst thou give all to thy daughters? And art thou come to this?

Edgar. Who gives any thing to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; set ratsbane by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inched bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits!—Tom's a-cold,—O, do de, do de, do de.—Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes: there could I have him now,—and there,—and there again, and there. [*Storm still.*

Lear. What, have his daughters brought him to this pass?—

Couldst thou save nothing? Didst thou give 'em all?

Fool. Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed.

Lear. Now, all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!

Kent. He hath no daughters, sir.

Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdued nature
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
Is it the fashion, that discarded fathers
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
Judicious punishment! 'twas this flesh begot
Those pelican daughters.

Edgar. Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill:
Halloo, halloo, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

Edgar. Take heed o' the foul fiend: obey thy parents;

keep thy word justly; swear not; set not thy sweet heart on proud array. Tom's a-cold.

Lear. What hast thou been?

Edgar. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curled my hair; wore gloves in my cap; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of heaven: one that slept in the contriving of lust, and waked to do it: wine loved I deeply, dice dearly; and in woman out-paramoured the Turk: false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman: keep thy pen from lenders' books, and defy the foul fiend.—

Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind;
Says suum, mun, ha, no, nonny.
Dolphin my boy, my boy, sessa! let him trot by.

[*Storm still.*

Lear. Why, thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncovered body this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou owest the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume.—Ha! here's three on's are sophisticated! Thou art the thing itself: unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art.—Off, off, you lendings! come, unbutton here.

[*Tearing off his clothes.*

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, be contented; 'tis a naughty night to swim in. Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the rest on's body cold.—Look, here comes a walking fire.

Edgar. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web

and the pin, squints the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.

Saint Withold footed thrice the old;
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And, aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

Kent. How fares your grace?

Enter GLOUCESTER, *with a torch.*

Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? What is't you seek?

Gloucester. What are you there? Your names? 120

Edgar. Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt and the water; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool; who is whipped from tithing to tithing, and stock-punished, and imprisoned; who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body, horse to ride, and weapon to wear;

But mice and rats, and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year. 130

Beware my follower.—Peace, Smulkin; peace, thou fiend!

Gloucester. What, hath your grace no better company?

Edgar. The prince of darkness is a gentleman:
Modo he's call'd, and Mahu.

Glou. Our flesh and blood is grown so vile, my lord,
That it doth hate what gets it.

Edgar. Poor Tom's a-cold.

Gloucester. Go in with me: my duty cannot suffer
To obey in all your daughters' hard commands:
Though their injunction be to bar my doors, 140

And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet have I ventured to come seek you out,
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher.—
What is the cause of thunder?

Kent. Good my lord, take his offer; go into the house.

Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban.—
What is your study?

Edgar. How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Importune him once more to go, my lord;
His wits begin to unsettle.

Gloucester. Canst thou blame him?
His daughters seek his death: ah, that good Kent!
He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!
Thou say'st the king grows mad! I'll tell thee, friend,
I am almost mad myself: I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life,
But lately, very late: I loved him, friend,
No father his son dearer: true to tell thee,

[*Storm still.*

The grief hath crazed my wits.—What a night's this!
I do beseech your grace,—

Lear. O, cry you mercy, sir.—
Noble philosopher, your company.

Edgar. Tom's a-cold.

Glou. In, fellow, there, into the hovel: keep thee warm.

Lear. Come, let's in all.

Kent. This way, my lord.

Lear. With him;
I will keep still with my philosopher.

Kent. Good my lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.

Gloucester. Take him you on.

Kent. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

Lear. Come, good Athenian.

Gloucester. No words, no words: hush.

Edgar. Child Rowland to the dark tower came;
His word was still,—Fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man. [*Exeunt.*

Scene V. Gloucester's *castle.*

Enter Cornwall *and* Edmund.

Cornwall. I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

Edmund. How, my lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

Cornwall. I now perceive, it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death, but a provoking merit, set-a-work by a reproveable badness in himself.

Edmund. How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O heavens! that this treason were not, or not I the detector!

Cornwall. Go with me to the duchess.

Edmund. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

Cornwall. True or false, it hath made thee Earl of Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

Edmund. [*Aside*] If I find him comforting the king, it will stuff his suspicion more fully.—I will persever in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

Cornwall. I will lay trust upon thee; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *A chamber in a farmhouse adjoining* GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

Enter GLOUCESTER, LEAR, KENT, Fool, *and* EDGAR.

Gloucester. Here is better than the open air; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can: I will not be long from you.

Kent. All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience: the gods reward your kindness! [*Exit Gloucester.*

Edgar. Frateretto calls me; and tells me Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness.—Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman? 10

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No, he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits
Come hissing in upon 'em,—

Edgar. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a courtezan's oath.

Lear. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight.—[*To Edgar*] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer;—[*To the Fool*] Thou, sapient sir, sit here.—Now, you she foxes!

Edgar. Look, where he stands and glares!—Wantest thou eyes at trial, madam?

Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me,—

Fool. Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak
Why she dares not come over to thee.

Edgar. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. Hopdance cries in Tom's belly for two white herring. Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

Kent. How do you, sir? Stand you not so amazed: Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first.—Bring in their evidence.—[*To Edgar*] Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;—[*To the Fool*] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,
Bench by his side:—[*To Kent*] you are o' the commission,
Sit you too.

Edgar. Let us deal justly.

Sleepest or wakest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth
Thy sheep shall take no harm.
Pur! the cat is gray.

Lear. Arraign her first! 'tis Goneril. I here take my oath before this honourable assembly, she kicked the poor king her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim
What store her heart is made on.—Stop her there!
Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her scape?

Edgar. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity!—Sir, where is the patience now
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

Edg. [*Aside*] My tears begin to take his part so much,
They'll mar my counterfeiting.

Lear. The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me.

Edgar. Tom will throw his head at them. Avaunt, you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,
Tooth that poisons if it bite;
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym,
Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail,
Tom will make them weep and wail:
For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs leap the hatch, and all are fled.

Do, de, de, de. Sessa! Come, march to wakes and fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan; see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?—[*To Edgar*] You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred; only I do not like the fashion of your garments: you will say they are Persian attire; but let them be changed.

Kent. Now, good my lord, lie here and rest awhile.

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise; draw the curtains: so, so, so: we'll go to supper i' the morning: so, so, so.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER.

Gloucester. Come hither, friend; where is the king my master?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

Gloucester. Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms;
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him:
There is a litter ready: lay him in't,
And drive towards Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet
Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master:
If thou shouldst dally half an hour, his life,
With thine, and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assured loss: take up, take up;
And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

Kent. Oppress'd nature sleeps.
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews,
Which, if convenience will not allow,
Stand in hard cure.—[*To the Fool.*] Come, help to bear thy master;
Thou must not stay behind.

Gloucester. Come, come, away.

[*Exeunt all but Edgar.*

Edgar. When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes
Who alone suffers suffers most i' the mind,
Leaving free things and happy shows behind:
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend makes the king bow,

He childed as I father'd!—Tom away! 110
Mark the high noises; and thyself bewray,
When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles thee,
In thy just proof, repeals and reconciles thee.
What will hap more to-night, safe scape the king!
Lurk, lurk. [*Exit.*

SCENE VII. GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, *and* Servants.

Cornwall. Post speedily to my lord your husband; show him this letter: the army of France is landed.—Seek out the traitor Gloucester.

[*Exeunt some of the Servants.*

Regan. Hang him instantly.

Goneril. Pluck out his eyes.

Cornwall. Leave him to my displeasure.—Edmund, keep you our sister company: the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father are not fit for your beholding. Advise the duke, where you are going, to a most festinate preparation: we are bound to the like. Our posts shall be swift and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister: farewell, my lord of Gloucester. 12

Enter OSWALD.

How now! where's the king?

Osw. My lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence:
Some five or six and thirty of his knights,
Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;
Who, with some other of the lords dependants,

Are gone with him towards Dover; where they boast
To have well-armed friends.

Cornwall. Get horses for your mistress.

Goneril. Farewell, sweet lord, and sister.

Cornwall. Edmund, farewell.

[*Exeunt Goneril, Edmund, and Oswald.*

Go, seek the traitor Gloucester,
Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

[*Exeunt other Servants.*

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice, yet our power
Shall do a courtesy to our wrath, which men
May blame, but not control.—Who's there? the traitor?

Re-enter Servants *with* GLOUCESTER.

Regan. Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

Cornwall. Bind fast his corky arms.

Gloucester. What means your graces? Good my friends, consider
You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

Cornwall. Bind him, I say. [*Servants bind him.*

Regan. Hard, hard.—O filthy traitor!

Gloucester. Unmerciful lady as you are, I am none.

Corn. To this chair bind him.—Villain, thou shalt find—

[*Regan plucks his beard.*

Gloucester. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

Regan. So white, and such a traitor!

Gloucester. Naughty lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,
Will quicken and accuse thee: I am your host:
With robbers' hand my hospitable favours
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Corn. Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?

Regan. Be simple-answer'd, for we know the truth.

Corn. And what confederacy have you with the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?

Regan. To whose hands have you sent the lunatic king?
Speak.

Gloucester. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one opposed.

Cornwall. Cunning.

Regan. And false.

Cornwall. Where hast thou sent the king?

Gloucester. To Dover.

Regan. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charged at peril—

Corn. Wherefore to Dover? Let him first answer that.

Gloucester. I am tied to the stake, and I must stand the course.

Regan. Wherefore to Dover?

Gloucester. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh stick boarish fangs.
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endured, would have buoy'd up
And quench'd the stelled fires:
Yet, poor old heart, he holp the heavens to rain.
If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that stern time,
Thou shouldst have said, "Good porter, turn the key,"
All cruels else subscribed: but I shall see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Corn. See't shalt thou never.—Fellows, hold the chair.—
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

Gloucester. He that will think to live till he be old,

Give me some help!—O cruel! O you gods!

Regan. One side will mock another; the other too.

Corn. If you see vengeance,—

First Serv. Hold your hand, my lord:
I have served you since I was a child;
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

Regan. How now, you dog!

First Serv. If you did wear a beard upon your chin,
I'd shake it on this quarrel. What do you mean?

Cornwall. My villain! [*They draw and fight.*

First Serv. Nay, then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

Regan. Give me thy sword.—A peasant stand up thus! [*Takes a sword, and runs at him behind.*

First Serv. O, I am slain!—My lord, you have one eye left
To see some mischief on him.—O! [*Dies.*

Cornwall. Lest it see more, prevent it,—Out, vile jelly!
Where is thy lustre now?

Gloucester. All dark and comfortless.—Where's my son Edmund?
Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature,
To quit this horrid act.

Regan. Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee: it was he
That made the overture of thy treasons to us;
Who is too good to pity thee.

Gloucester. O my follies! Then Edgar was abused.
Kind gods, forgive me that, and prosper him!

Regan. Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover.—[*Exit one with Gloucester*] How is't, my lord? how look you?

Cornwall. I have received a hurt: follow me, lady.—

Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave
Upon the dunghill.—Regan, I bleed apace;
Untimely comes this hurt: give me your arm.
[*Exit Cornwall, led by Regan.*

Sec. Serv. I'll never care what wickedness I do,
If this man come to good.

Third Serv. If she live long,
And in the end meet the old course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.

Sec. Serv. Let's follow the old earl, and get the Bedlam
To lead him where he would: his roguish madness
Allows itself to any thing.

Third Serv. Go thou: I'll fetch some flax and whites of eggs
To apply to his bleeding face. Now, heaven help him!
[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The heath.*

Enter EDGAR.

Edgar. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than still contemn'd and flatter'd. To be worst,
The lowest and most dejected thing of fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear:
The lamentable change is from the best;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace!

The wretch that thou hast blown unto the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts.—But who comes here?

Enter GLOUCESTER, *led by an* Old Man.

My father, poorly led?—World, world, O world!
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.

Old Man. O, my good lord, I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant, these fourscore years.

Glou. Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone:
Thy comforts can do me no good at all;
Thee they may hurt.

Old Man. Alack, sir, you cannot see your way.

Glou. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes;
I stumbled when I saw: full oft 'tis seen,
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities.—O dear son Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath!
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say I had eyes again!

Old Man. How now! Who's there?

Edgar. [*Aside*] O gods! Who is't can say "I am at the worst"?
I am worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edg. [*Aside*] And worse I may be yet: the worst is not
So long as we can say "This is the worst."

Old Man. Fellow, where goest?

Gloucester. Is it a beggar-man?

Old Man. Madman and beggar too.

Gloucester. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I' the last night's storm I such a fellow saw;

Which made me think a man a worm: my son
Came then into my mind; and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him: I have heard more since.
As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport.

Edgar. [*Aside*] How should this be?
Bad is the trade that must play fool to sorrow,
Angering itself and others.—Bless thee, master!

Gloucester. Is that the naked fellow?

Old Man. Ay, my lord.

Glou. Then, prithee, get thee gone: if, for my sake,
Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile or twain,
I' the way toward Dover, do it for ancient love;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Which I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir, he is mad.

Glo. 'Tis the times' plague, when madmen lead the blind.
Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure;
Above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,
Come on't what will. [*Exit.*

Gloucester. Sirrah, naked fellow,—

Edgar. Poor Tom's a-cold.—[*Aside*] I cannot daub it further.

Gloucester. Come hither, fellow.

Edgar. [*Aside*] And yet I must.—Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

Gloucester. Know'st thou the way to Dover?

Edgar. Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-path. Poor Tom hath been scared out of his good wits. Bless thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend! Five fiends have been in poor Tom at once; of lust, as Obidicut; Hobbididance, prince of dumbness; Mahu, of stealing;

Modo, of murder; and Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and mowing, who since possesses chambermaids and waiting-women. So, bless thee, master!

Glou. Here, take this purse, thou whom the heavens' plagues
Have humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier:—heavens, deal so still!
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,
That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
Because he doth not feel, feel your power quickly;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough.—Dost thou know Dover?

Edgar. Ay, master.

Glou. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep:
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me: and from that place
I shall no leading need.

Edgar. Give me thy arm:
Poor Tom shall lead thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Before the* Duke of ALBANY'S *palace.*

Enter GONERIL *and* EDMUND.

Gon. Welcome, my lord: I marvel our mild husband
Not met us on the way.

Enter OSWALD.

Now, where's your master?

Oswald. Madam, within; but never man so changed.
I told him of the army that was landed;

He smiled at it: I told him you were coming;
His answer was, "The worse:" of Gloucester's treachery,
And of the loyal service of his son,
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot,
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out:
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him;
What like, offensive.

Goneril. [*To Edmund*] Then shall you go no further.
It is the cowish terror of his spirit,
That dares not undertake: he'll not feel wrongs,
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother;
Hasten his musters and conduct his powers:
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us: ere long you are like to hear,
If you dare venture in your own behalf,
A mistress's command. Wear this; spare speech;
[*Giving a favour.*
Decline your head: this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air:
Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edmund. Yours in the ranks of death.

Goneril. My most dear Gloucester!
[*Exit Edmund.*
O, the difference of man and man! To thee
A woman's services are due: my fool
Usurps my body.

Oswald. Madam, here comes my lord. [*Exit.*

Enter ALBANY.

Goneril. I have been worth the whistle.

Albany. O Goneril!

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition:
That nature which contemns it origin
Cannot be border'd certain in itself;
She that herself will sliver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither,
And come to deadly use.

Goneril. No more; the text is foolish.

Albany. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile:
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd?
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate! have you madded.
Could my good brother suffer you to do it?
A man, a prince, by him so benefited!
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences,
It will come,
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.

Goneril. Milk-liver'd man!
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering; that not know'st
Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum?
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land,
With plumed helm thy state begins to threat;
Whiles thou, a moral fool, sitt'st still, and criest
"Alack, why does he so?"

Albany. See thyself, devil!
Proper deformity seems not in the fiend

So horrid as in woman.

Goneril. O vain fool!

Alb. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
Be-monster not thy feature. Were't my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones: howe'er thou art a fiend,
A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Goneril. Marry, your manhood now!

Enter a Messenger.

Albany. What news?

Messenger. O, my good lord, the Duke of Cornwall's dead;

Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloucester.

Albany. Gloucester's eyes!

Messenger. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Opposed against the act, bending his sword
To his great master; who, thereat enraged,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead;
But not without that harmful stroke which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

Albany. This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge!—But, O poor Gloucester!
Lost he his other eye?

Messenger. Both, both, my lord.—
This letter, madam, craves a speedy answer;
'Tis from your sister.

Goneril. [*Aside*] One way I like this well;
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck

Upon my hateful life: another way
The news is not so tart.—I'll read, and answer. [*Exit.*

Alb. Where was his son when they did take his eyes?

Messenger. Come with my lady hither.

Albany. He is not here.

Messenger. No, my good lord; I met him back again.

Albany. Knows he the wickedness? 91

Mess. Ay, my good lord; 'twas he inform'd against him;
And quit the house on purpose, that their punishment
Might have the freer course.

Albany. Gloucester, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,
And to revenge thine eyes.—Come hither, friend:
Tell me what more thou know'st. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The French camp near Dover.*

Enter KENT *and a* Gentleman.

Kent. Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back know you the reason?

Gentleman. Something he left imperfect in the state, which since his coming forth is thought of; which imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger, that his personal return was most required and necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general?

Gentleman. The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the queen to any demonstration of grief? 10

Gentleman. Ay, sir; she took them, read them in my presence;

And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek: it seem'd she was a queen
Over her passion, who most rebel-like
Sought to be king o'er her.

Kent. O, then it moved her.

Gentleman. Not to a rage: patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once: her smiles and tears
Were like a better way: those happy smilets
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity most beloved,
If all could so become it.

Kent. Made she no verbal question?

Gentleman. Faith, once or twice she heaved the name of "father"
Pantingly forth, as if it press'd her heart;
Cried "Sisters, sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters!
Kent! father! sisters! What, i' the storm? i' the night?
Let pity not be believed!" There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And clamour moisten'd: then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

Kent. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and mate could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?

Gentleman. No.

Kent. Was this before the king return'd?

Gentleman. No, since.

Kent. Well, sir, the poor distressed Lear's i' the town;
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers

What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gentleman. Why, good sir?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him: his own unkindness,
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters,—these things sting
His mind so venomously, that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gentleman. Alack, poor gentleman!

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?

Gentleman. 'Tis so, they are a-foot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,
And leave you to attend him: some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you, go
Along with me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *The same. A tent.*

Enter, with drum and colours, CORDELIA, Doctor, *and* Soldiers.

Cordelia. Alack, 'tis he: why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow-weeds,
With burdocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;

Tomas Mac Lughain

Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye. [*Exit an Officer.*]—What can man's wisdom
In the restoring his bereaved sense?
He that helps him take all my outward worth.

Doctor. There is means, madam:
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks; that to provoke in him
Are many simples ~~operative~~, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cordelia. All blest secrets,
All you unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears! be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress! Seek, seek for him;
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. News, madam;
The British powers are marching hitherward.

Cordelia. 'Tis known before; our preparation stands
In expectation of them.—O dear father,
It is thy business that I go about;
Therefore great France
My mourning and important tears hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
But love, dear love, and our aged father's right:
Soon may I hear and see him! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*

Enter REGAN *and* OSWALD.

Regan. But are my brother's powers set forth?
Oswald. Ay, madam.
Regan. Himself in person there?
Oswald. Madam, with much ado:
Your sister is the better soldier.
Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your lord at home?
Oswald. No, madam.
Regan. What might import my sister's letter to him?
Oswald. I know not, lady.
Regan. Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.
It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,
To let him live: where he arrives he moves
All hearts against us: Edmund, I think, is gone,
In pity of his misery, to dispatch
His nighted life; moreover, to descry
The strength o' the enemy.
Osw. I must needs after him, madam, with my letter.
Regan. Our troops set forth to-morrow: stay with us;
The ways are dangerous.
Oswald. I may not, madam:
My lady charged my duty in this business.
Regan. Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you
Transport her purposes by word? Belike,
Something—I know not what: I'll love thee much,
Let me unseal the letter.
Oswald. Madam, I had rather—
Regan. I know your lady does not love her husband;

I am sure of that: and at her late being here
She gave strange œillades and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

Oswald. I, madam?

Regan. I speak in understanding; you are, I know't:
Therefore I do advise you, take this note:
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talk'd;
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your lady's: you may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you, give him this;
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray, desire her call her wisdom to her.
So, fare you well.
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Oswald. Would I could meet him, madam! I would show
What party I do follow.

Regan. Fare thee well. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *The country near Dover.*

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* EDGAR *dressed like a peasant.*

Glou. When shall I come to the top of that same hill?

Edgar. You do climb up it now: look, how we labour.

Gloucester. Methinks the ground is even.

Edgar. Horrible steep.
Hark, do you hear the sea?

Gloucester. No, truly.

Edgar. Why, then, your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

Gloucester. So may it be, indeed:
Methinks thy voice is alter'd, and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.
Edgar. You're much deceived: in nothing am I changed
But in my garments.
Gloucester. Methinks you're better spoken.
Edgar. Come on, sir; here's the place: stand still.
How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles: half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head:
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
Diminish'd to her cock,—her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight: the murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebble chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more;
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.
Gloucester. Set me where you stand.
Edgar. Give me your hand: you are now within a foot
Of the extreme verge: for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.
Gloucester. Let go my hand.
Here, friend, 's another purse; in it a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking: fairies and gods
Prosper it with thee! Go thou further off;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.
Edgar. Now fare you well, good sir.
Gloucester. With all my heart.
Edgar. [*Aside*] Why I do trifle thus with his despair

Is done to cure it.

Gloucester. [*Kneeling*] O you mighty gods!
This world I do renounce, and in your sights
Shake patiently my great affliction off:
If I could bear it longer, and not fall
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
My snuff and loathed part of nature should
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him!—
Now, fellow, fare thee well.

Edgar. Gone, sir: farewell.

[*Gloucester throws himself forward, and falls.*

[*Aside*] And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life, when life itself
Yields to the theft: had he been where he thought,
By this had thought been past.—Alive or dead?
Ho you, sir! friend! Hear you, sir! speak!—
[*Aside*] Thus might he pass indeed: yet he revives.—
What are you, sir?

Gloucester. Away, and let me die.

Edg. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers, air,
So many fathom down precipitating,
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg: but thou dost breathe;
Hast heavy substance; bleed'st not; speak'st; art sound.
Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.

Gloucester. But have I fall'n, or no?

Edgar. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn.
Look up a-height; the shrill-gorged lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

Gloucester. Alack, I have no eyes.
Is wretchedness deprived that benefit,

To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.

Edgar. Give me your arm:
Up: so. How is't? Feel you your legs? You stand.

Glou. Too well, too well.

Edgar. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o' the cliff, what thing was that
Which parted from you?

Gloucester. A poor unfortunate beggar.

Edgar. As I stood here below, methought his eyes
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd and waved like the enridged sea:
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours
Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

Gloucester. I do remember now: henceforth I'll bear
Affliction till it do cry out itself
"Enough, enough," and die. That thing you speak of,
I took it for a man; often 'twould say
"The fiend, the fiend:" he led me to that place.

Edgar. Bear free and patient thoughts.—But who comes here?

Enter LEAR, *fantastically dressed with wild flowers.*

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am the king himself.

Edgar. [*Aside*] O thou side-piercing sight!

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect.—There's your press-money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-

keeper: draw me a clothier's yard.—Look, look, a mouse! Peace, peace; this piece of toasted cheese will do't.—There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant.—Bring up the brown bills.—O, well flown, bird! i' the clout, i' the clout: hewgh!—Give the word.

Edgar. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Gloucester. I know that voice.

Lear. Ha! Goneril,—with a white beard!—They flattered me like a dog; and told me I had white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to every thing that I said!—"Ay" and "no" too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once, and the wind to make me chatter; when the thunder would not peace at my bidding; there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words: they told me I was every thing; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.

Glou. The trick of that voice I do well remember: Is't not the king?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king:
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes!
I pardon that man's life.—What was thy cause?—
Adultery?—
Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
For Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters.
Pah, pah! Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination: there's money for thee.

Gloucester. O, let me kiss that hand!

Lear. Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality.

Gloucester. O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world Shall so wear out to naught.—Dost thou know me?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me? No, do thy worst, blind Cupid; I'll not love. Read thou this challenge; mark but the penning of it.

Glou. Were all the letters suns, I could not see one.

Edgar. [*Aside*] I would not take this from report; it is, And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

Gloucester. What, with the case of eyes?

Lear. O, ho, are you there with me? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light: yet you see how this world goes.

Gloucester. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears: see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear: change places; and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Gloucester. Ay, sir.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur? There thou mightst behold the great image of authority: a dog's obeyed in office.—

The usurer hangs the cozener.
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.
None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em:
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal the accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;
And, like a scurvy politician, seem

To see the things thou dost not.—Now, now, now, now:
Pull off my boots: harder, harder: so.

Edgar. [*Aside*] O, matter and impertinency mix'd!
Reason in madness!

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes.
I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester:
Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:
Thou know'st, the first time that we smell the air,
We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.

Gloucester. Alack, alack the day!

Lear. When we are born, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of fools.—This' a good block:—
It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
A troop of horse with felt: I'll put't in proof;
And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

Enter a Gentleman, *with* Attendants.

Gentleman. O, here he is: lay hand upon him.—Sir,
Your most dear daughter—

Lear. No rescue? What, a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of fortune. Use me well;
You shall have ransom. Let me have a surgeon;
I am cut to the brains.

Gentleman. You shall have any thing.

Lear. No seconds? all myself?
Why, this would make a man a man of salt,
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust.

Gentleman. Good sir,—

Lear. I will die bravely, like a smug bridegroom. What!
I will be jovial: come, come; I am a king,
My masters, know you that.

Gentleman. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

Lear. Then there's life in't. Nay, an you get it, you shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

[*Exit running; Attendants follow.*

Gentleman. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

Edgar. Hail, gentle sir.

Gentleman. Sir, speed you: what's your will?

Edgar. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle toward? 190

Gentleman. Most sure and vulgar: every one hears that,
Which can distinguish sound.

Edgar. But, by your favour,
How near's the other army?

Gentleman. Near and on speedy foot; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.

Edgar. I thank you, sir: that's all.

Gent. Though that the queen on special cause is here,
Her army is moved on.

Edgar. I thank you, sir. [*Exit Gentleman.*

Glou. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me;
Let not my worser spirit tempt me again
To die before you please!

Edgar. Well pray you, father. 200

Gloucester. Now, good sir, what are you?

Edg. A most poor man, made tame to fortune's blows;
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some biding.

Gloucester. Hearty thanks:
The bounty and the benison of heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter OSWALD.

Oswald. A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first framed flesh
To raise my fortunes.—Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember: the sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Gloucester. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to it. [*Edgar interposes.*

Oswald. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Darest thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence;
Lest that the infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edgar. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

Oswald. Let go, slave, or thou diest!

Edgar. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk pass. An chud ha' bin zwaggered out of my life, 'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight. Nay, come not near th' old man; keep out, che vor ye, or ise try whether your costard or my ballow be the harder: chill be plain with you.

Oswald. Out, dunghill!

Edgar. Chill pick your teeth, zir: come; no matter vor your foins. [*They fight. Oswald falls.*

Osw. Slave, thou hast slain me: villain, take my purse:
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body;
And give the letters which thou find'st about me
To Edmund Earl of Gloucester; seek him out
Upon the British party. O, untimely death! [*Dies.*

Edgar. I know thee well: a serviceable villain;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

Gloucester. What, is he dead?

Edgar. Sit you down, father; rest you.—
Let's see his pockets: these letters that he speaks of
May be my friends. He's dead; I am only sorry
He had no other death's-man. Let us see:
Leave, gentle wax; and, manners, blame us not:
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts;
Their papers, is more lawful.

[*Reads*] "Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have many opportunities to cut him off: if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offered. There is nothing done, if he return the conqueror: then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.

"Your—wife, so I would say—affectionate servant,

"GONERIL."

O undistinguish'd space of woman's will!
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life;
And the exchange my brother!—Here, in the sands,
Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified
Of murderous lechers: and, in the mature time,
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practised duke: for him 'tis well
That of thy death and business I can tell.

Glou. The king is mad: how stiff is my vile sense,
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling
Of my huge sorrows! Better I were distract:
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
And woes by wrong imaginations lose
The knowledge of themselves.

Edgar. Give me your hand:

[*Drum afar off.*

Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum:
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *A tent in the French camp.* LEAR *on a bed asleep, soft music playing;* Gentleman, *and others attending.*

Enter CORDELIA, KENT, *and* Doctor.

Cor. O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work,
To match thy goodness? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.
Kent. To be acknowledged, madam, is o'erpaid.
All my reports go with the modest truth;
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.
Cordelia. Be better suited:
These weeds are memories of those worser hours:
I prithee, put them off.
Kent. Pardon, dear madam;
Yet to be known shortens my made intent:
My boon I make it, that you know me not
Till time and I think meet.
Cordelia. Then be't so, my good lord.—[*To the Doctor*]
How does the king?
Doctor. Madam, sleeps still.
Cordelia. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature!
The untuned and jarring senses, O, wind up
Of this child-changed father!
Doctor. So please your majesty
That we may wake the king: he hath slept long.
Cordelia. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' the sway of your own will. Is he array'd?
Gentleman. Ay, madam; in the heaviness of sleep
We put fresh garments on him.

Doctor. Be by, good madam, when we do awake him;
I doubt not of his temperance.

Cordelia. Very well.

Doctor. Please you, draw near.—Louder the music there!

Cordelia. O my dear father! Restoration hang
Thy medicine on my lips; and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made!

Kent. Kind and dear princess!

Cordelia. Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Had challenged pity of them. Was this a face
To be opposed against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch—poor perdu!—
With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.—He wakes; speak to him.

Doctor. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. How does my royal lord? how fares your majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong to take me out o' the grave:
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cordelia. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know: when did you die?

Cordelia. Still, still, far wide!

Doctor. He's scarce awake: let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?
I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity,
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
Of my condition!
Cordelia. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:—
No, sir, you must not kneel.
Lear. Pray, do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.
Cordelia. And so I am, I am,
Lear. Be your tears wet? yes, faith. I pray, weep not:
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
You have some cause, they have not.
Cordelia. No cause, no cause.
Lear. Am I in France?
Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.
Lear. Do not abuse me.
Doctor. Be comforted, good madam: the great rage,
You see, is kill'd in him: and yet it is danger

To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more
Till further settling.

Cordelia. Will't please your highness walk?

Lear. You must bear with me:
Pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.
[*Exeunt all except Kent and Gentleman.*

Gentleman. Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gentleman. Who is conductor of his people?

Kent. As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

Gentleman. They say Edgar, his banished son, is with the Earl of Kent in Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable. 'Tis time to look about; the powers of the kingdom approach apace.

Gentleman. The arbitrement is like to be bloody. Fare you well, sir. [*Exit.*

Kent. My point and period will be throughly wrought,
Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought. [*Exit.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The British camp near Dover.*

Enter, with drum and colours, EDMUND, REGAN, Officers, Soldiers, *and others.*

Edmund. Know of the duke if his last purpose hold,
Or whether since he is advised by aught
To change the course: he's full of alteration
And self-reproving: bring his constant pleasure.
[*To a Gentleman, who goes out.*

Regan. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edmund. 'Tis to be doubted, madam.

Regan. Now, sweet lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you:
Tell me,—but truly,—but then speak the truth,
Do you not love my sister?

Edmund. In honour'd love.

Regan. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her, as far as we call hers.

Edmund. No, by mine honour, madam.

Regan. I never shall endure her: dear my lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edmund. Fear me not:—
She and the duke her husband!

Enter, with drum and colours, ALBANY, GONERIL, *and* Soldiers.

Goneril. [*Aside*] I had rather lose the battle than that sister

Should loosen him and me.

Albany. Our very loving sister, well be-met.—
Sir, this I hear; the king is come to his daughter,
With others whom the rigour of our state
Forced to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant: for this business,
It toucheth us, as France invades our land,
Not bolds the king, with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

Edmund. Sir, you speak nobly.

Regan. Why is this reason'd?

Goneril. Combine together 'gainst the enemy;
For these domestic and particular broils
Are not the question here.

Albany. Let's, then, determine
With the ancient of war on our proceedings.

Edmund. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

Regan. Sister, you'll go with us?

Goneril. No.

Regan. 'Tis most convenient; pray you, go with us.

Goneril. [*Aside*] O, ho, I know the riddle.—I will go.

As they are going out, enter EDGAR *disguised.*

Edgar. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.

Albany. I'll overtake you.—Speak.

[*Exeunt all except Albany and Edgar.*

Edgar. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it: wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion that will prove
What is avouched there. If you miscarry,
Your business of the world hath so an end,

And machination ceases. Fortune love you!

Albany. Stay till I have read the letter.

Edgar. I was forbid it.
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I'll appear again.

Albany. Why, fare thee well: I will o'erlook thy paper.

[*Exit Edgar.*

Re-enter EDMUND.

Edmund. The enemy's in view; draw up your powers.
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
By diligent discovery; but your haste
Is now urg'd on you.

Albany. We will greet the time. [*Exit.*

Edmund. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd,
If both remain alive: to take the widow
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive. Now then we'll use
His countenance for the battle; which being done,
Let her who would be rid of him devise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,—
The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon; for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *A field between the two camps.*

Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours, LEAR, CORDELIA, *and* Soldiers, *over the stage; and exeunt.*

Enter EDGAR *and* GLOUCESTER.

Edgar. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive:
If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.

Gloucester. Grace go with you, sir! [*Exit Edgar.*

Alarum and retreat within. Re-enter EDGAR.

Edgar. Away, old man; give me thy hand; away!
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en:
Give me thy hand; come on.

Gloucester. No further, sir; a man may rot even here.

Edgar. What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
Ripeness is all: come on.

Gloucester. And that's true too. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The British camp, near Dover.*

Enter, in conquest, with drum and colours, EDMUND; LEAR *and* CORDELIA, *prisoners;* Captain, Soldiers, *&c.*

Edmund. Some officers take them away: good guard,
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.

Cordelia. We are not the first

Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters?

Lear. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
And pray and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news; and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out;
And take upon 's the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spies: and we'll wear out,
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
That ebb and flow by the moon.

Edmund. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee?
He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;
The good-years shall devour them, flesh and fell,
Ere they shall make us weep; we'll see 'em starve first.
Come. [*Exeunt Lear and Cordelia, guarded.*

Edmund. Come hither, captain; hark.
Take thou this note [*Giving a paper*]; go follow them to prison:
One step I have advanced thee; if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes: know thou this, that men
Are as the time is: to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword: thy great employment
Will not bear question; either say thou'lt do't,

Or thrive by other means.

Captain. I'll do't, my lord.

Edmund. About it; and write happy when thou hast done.

Mark,—I say, instantly; and carry it so
As I have set it down.

Captain. I cannot draw a cart, nor eat dried oats;
If't be man's work, I'll do't. [*Exit.*

Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, *another* Captain, *and* Soldiers.

Albany. Sir, you have shown to-day your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well: you have the captives
Who were the opposites of this day's strife:
We do require them of you, so to use them
As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.

Edmund. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable king
To some retention and appointed guard;
Whose age has charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side;
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent the queen;
My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, to appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time
We sweat and bleed: the friend hath lost his friend;
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are cursed
By those that feel their sharpness:
The question of Cordelia and her father
Requires a fitter place.

Albany. Sir, by your patience,

I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.

Regan. That's as we list to grace him.
Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded,
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers;
Bore the commission of my place and person;
The which immediacy may well stand up
And call itself your brother.

Goneril. Not so hot:
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
More than in your addition.

Regan. In my rights,
By me invested, he compeers the best.

Goneril. That were the most, if he should husband you.

Regan. Jesters do oft prove prophets.

Goneril. Holla, holla!
That eye that told you so look'd but a-squint.

Regan. Lady, I am not well; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach.— General,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony;
Dispose of them, of me; the walls are thine:
Witness the world that I create thee here
My lord and master.

Goneril. Mean you to enjoy him?

Albany. The let-alone lies not in your good will.

Edmund. Nor in thine, lord.

Albany. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Regan. [*To Edmund*] Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

Albany. Stay yet; hear reason.—Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital trĕason; and, in thine attaint,
This gilded serpent [*Pointing to Goneril*].—For your claim, fair sister,

I bar it in the interest of my wife;
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your bans.
If you will marry, make your loves to me;
My lady is bespoke.

Goneril. An interlude!

Albany. Thou art arm'd, Gloucester: let the trumpet sound:
If none appear to prove upon thy person
Thy heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge [*Throwing down a glove*]; I'll prove it on thy heart,
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

Regan. Sick, O, sick!

Goneril. [*Aside*] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.

Edmund. There's my exchange [*Throwing down a glove*]; what in the world he is
That names me traitor, villain-like he lies:
Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,
On him, on you,—who not?—I will maintain
My truth and honour firmly.

Albany. A herald, ho!

Edmund. A herald, ho, a herald!

Albany. Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

Regan. My sickness grows upon me.

Albany. She is not well; convey her to my tent.

[*Exit Regan, led.*

Enter a Herald.

Come hither, herald,—Let the trumpet sound,—

And read out this.

Captain. Sound, trumpet! [*A trumpet sounds.*

Herald. [*Reads*] "If any man of quality or degree within the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund, supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear by the third sound of the trumpet: he is bold in his defence."

Edmund. Sound! [*First trumpet.*

Herald. Again! [*Second trumpet.*

Herald. Again! [*Third trumpet.*

[*Trumpet answers within.*

Enter EDGAR, *at the third sound, armed, with a trumpet before him.*

Albany. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' the trumpet.

Herald. What are you?
Your name, your quality? and why you answer
This present summons?

Edgar. Know, my name is lost;
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit:
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope.

Albany. Which is that adversary?

Edgar. What's he that speaks for Edmund Earl of Gloucester?

Edmund. Himself; what say'st thou to him?

Edgar. Draw thy sword,
That, if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice: here is mine.
Behold, it is the privilege of mine honours,
My oath, and my profession: I protest,—
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,

Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,
Thy valour and thy heart,—thou art a traitor;
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince;
And, from the extremest upward of thy head
To the descent and dust below thy foot,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou "no,"
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

Edmund. In wisdom I should ask thy name;
But, since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,
What safe and nicely I might well delay
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn:
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head;
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart;
Which, for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise,
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever.—Trumpets, speak!

[*Alarums. They fight. Edmund falls.*

Albany. Save him, save him.

Goneril. This is practice, Gloucester:
By the law of arms thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguiled.

Albany. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it.—Hold, sir;
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil:—
No tearing, lady; I perceive you know it.

[*Gives the letter to Edmund.*

Goneril. Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine:
Who can arraign me for't? [*Exit.*

Albany. Most monstrous! oh! 160
Know'st thou this paper?
Edmund. Ask me not what I know.
Albany. Go after her: she's desperate; govern her.
Edmund. What have you charged me with, that have I done;
And more, much more; the time will bring it out:
'Tis past, and so am I.—But what art thou
That hast this fortune on me? If thou'rt noble,
I do forgive thee.
Edgar. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund;
If more, the more thou hast wrong'd me.
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son. 170
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us:
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.
Edmund. Thou hast spoken right, 'tis true;
The wheel is come full circle; I am here.
Albany. Methought thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness: I must embrace thee:
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee or thy father!
Edgar. Worthy prince,
I know't.
Albany. Where have you hid yourself? 180
How have you known the miseries of your father?
Edgar. By nursing them, my lord. List a brief tale;
And when 'tis told, O, that my heart would burst!
The bloody proclamation to escape,
That follow'd me so near,—O, our lives' sweetness!
That we the pain of death would hourly die

Rather than die at once!—taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags; to assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd: and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones new lost; became his guide,
Led him, begg'd for him, saved him from despair;
Never—O fault!—reveal'd myself unto him,
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd;
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him my pilgrimage: but his flaw'd heart,
Alack, too weak the conflict to support!
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.

Edmund. This speech of yours hath moved me,
And shall perchance do good: but speak you on;
You look as you had something more to say.

Albany. If there be more, more woful, hold it in;
For I am almost ready to dissolve,
Hearing of this.

Edgar. This would have seem'd a period
To such as love not sorrow; but another,
To amplify too much, would make much more,
And top extremity.
Whilst I was big in clamour, came there a man,
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society; but then, finding
Who 'twas that so endured, with his strong arms
He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
As he'd burst heaven; threw him on my father;
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him
That ever ear received: which in recounting
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life

Began to crack: twice then the trumpets sounded,
And there I left him tranced.

Albany. But who was this?

Edgar. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent; who in disguise
Follow'd his enemy king, and did him service
Improper for a slave.

Enter a Gentleman, *with a bloody knife.*

Gent. Help, help, O, help!

Edgar. What kind of help?

Albany. Speak, man.

Edg. What means that bloody knife?

Gentleman. 'Tis hot, it smokes;
It came even from the heart of—O, she's dead!

Albany. Who dead? speak, man.

Gentleman. Your lady, sir, your lady: and her sister
By her is poisoned; she hath confess'd it.

Edmund. I was contracted to them both: all three
Now marry in an instant.

Edgar. Here comes Kent.

Alb. Produce their bodies, be they alive or dead:
This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity. [*Exit Gentleman.*

Enter KENT.

O, is this he?
The time will not allow the compliment
Which very manners urges.

Kent. I am come
To bid my king and master aye good night:
Is he not here?

Albany. Great thing of us forgot!
Speak, Edmund, where's the king? and where's Cordelia?—
[*The bodies of Goneril and Regan are brought in.*

See'st thou this object, Kent?

Kent. Alack, why thus?

Edmund. Yet Edmund was beloved:
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.

Albany. Even so.—Cover their faces.

Edmund. I pant for life: some good I mean to do,
Despite of mine own nature. Quickly send,
Be brief in it, to the castle; for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia:
Nay, send in time.

Albany. Run, run, O, run!

Edgar. To who, my lord?—Who has the office? send
Thy token of reprieve.

Edmund. Well thought on: take my sword;
Give it the captain.

Albany. Haste thee, for thy life. [*Exit Edgar.*

Edmund. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself.

Albany. The gods defend her!—Bear him hence awhile.
[*Edmund is borne off.*

Re-enter LEAR, *with* CORDELIA *dead in his arms;* EDGAR, Captain, *and others following.*

Lear. Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones:
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever!
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,

Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promised end?

Edgar. Or image of that horror?

Albany. Fall, and cease!

Lear. This feather stirs; she lives! if it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. O my good master! [*Kneeling.*

Lear. Prithee, away.

Edgar. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all! 270
I might have saved her; now she's gone for ever!—
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little. Ha!
What is't thou say'st?—Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

Captain. 'Tis true, my lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow?
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion
I would have made them skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me.—Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o' the best: I'll tell you straight. 280

Kent. If fortune brag of two she loved and hated,
One of them we behold.

Lear. This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same,
Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that;
He'll strike, and quickly too: he's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good lord; I am the very man,—

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That, from your first of difference and decay,
Have follow'd your sad steps.

Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else: all's cheerless, dark, and deadly.
Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves,
And desperately are dead.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

Albany. He knows not what he says; and vain is it
That we present us to him.

Edgar. Very bootless.

Enter a Captain.

Capt. Edmund is dead, my lord.

Albany. That's but a trifle here.—
You lords and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay may come
Shall be applied: for us, we will resign,
During the life of this old majesty,
To him our absolute power:—[*To Edgar and Kent*] you, to your rights;
With boot, and such addition as your honours
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings.—O, see, see!

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never!—
Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.—
Do you see this? Look on her,—look,—her lips,—
Look there, look there!— [*Dies.*

Edgar. He faints!—My lord, my lord!

Kent. Break, heart; I prithee, break!

Edgar. Look up, my lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edgar. He is gone indeed.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endured so long:
He but usurp'd his life.

Albany. Bear them from hence.—Our present business
Is general woe.—[*To Kent and Edgar*] Friends of my soul, you twain
Rule in this realm, and the gored state sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go;
My master calls me, I must not say no.

Albany. The weight of this sad time we must obey;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most: we that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

[*Exeunt, with a dead march.*

NOTES.

G. = *Glossary*. Several other abbreviations used sometimes in the *Notes* are explained at the beginning of the *Glossary*, in which they occur more frequently. They should be observed; see p. 219.

By "the Folio" is meant the 1st Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays, published in 1623.

ACT I.

Scene 1.

The following passage expresses well the "atmosphere" of *King Lear*—its spirit of primitiveness and untutored, almost savage, simplicity of character and custom, which should be realised from the outset:

"In this play, as in *Macbeth*, Shakspere drew his chief materials from the storehouse of Celtic tradition, and he has sought to create a dramatic atmosphere that would harmonize with his subject. In *Macbeth* he had dealt with the imaginative and mystical elements in the Celtic nature, and had lifted the veil from that supernatural region whence they draw their nourishment. But in *King Lear* he singled out a different characteristic of the race—its uncontrollable and wayward passion, which links it not with the spirit-world, but with the untamed, ravening forces of purely animal or natural life. We find throughout the play that we are in the midst of a primæval society, whose 'gods' sit very far removed from it in the iron heavens, and which still feels the instinct of 'the ape and tiger' stirring in its blood....We see 'unaccommodated man' stripped of his 'lendings,' 'a poor, bare, forked

animal,' scarcely distinguishable from his environment, save for the presence of a few radiant types to bear witness that he is

'For aye removed
From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.'

"It is therefore not till we have become steeped in the peculiar atmosphere of the whole play that we can do justice to the apparently preposterous incidents of the opening scene."—(F. S. Boas, *Shakspere and his Predecessors*, p. 442.) And it should be noted how entirely this opening scene is the basis of the action of the main plot. The whole tragedy of Lear's fate (which inevitably involves the fate of others) springs from the fundamental mistake which he makes in this Scene, and of which the consequences develop to the very end.

1. *more affected*, cared more, felt more *affection*, for; the commonest sense in Shakespeare.

6. *curiosity*, most precise scrutiny; or perhaps 'captious scrupulousness,' as in I. 4. 67. Neither son-in-law can say that one share is better than the other, however closely he may examine and compare them. It is significant that the play begins with these remarks upon what seems to Lear's friends a piece of waywardness and inconsistency. They strike a keynote.

moiety=share, not 'half,' which would exclude Cordelia from a share in the kingdom. *moiety;* see G.

10. *brazed*, hardened; he has lost all shame about acknowledging Edmund. Cf. "brazen-faced," II. 2. 23; 'to brazen a thing out.'

12. *proper*, handsome; cf. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, I. 2. 88, "a proper...gentlemanlike man." This description of Edmund is significant afterwards.

14. *some year*, about a year; cf. what Edmund says, I. 2. 5, 6.

15. *something saucily*. "Gloucester's joking here at Edmund's bastardy, without any shame for his own fault, or thought of the danger of stinging the young man to anger and jealousy of his brother Edgar, finds its due commentary in the disasters which it brings on him"—*Moberly*. See V. 3. 171, 172.

24. *deserving*, i.e. deserving to be "known better."

25. *He hath been out*, i.e. abroad, where his illegitimate birth would be unknown. Coleridge dwells on the great importance of Gloucester's remark as showing one of the evil influences which have moulded (and therefore in a measure palliate) Edmund's character, namely, isolation from home. He has been an outcast, seeking his fortune in foreign lands; made from boyhood to feel his inferiority to his

brother Edgar. Nor is there hope of his position being bettered, for, "as if to preclude all risk of his interference with the father's views for the elder and legitimate son," he is told that he must "away... again." Little wonder if he is embittered.

Stage-direction: *Sennet*, a set of notes played on a trumpet; see G. *coronet;* used for *crown*, as in 1 *Henry VI.* v. 4. 134.

27. With the entrance of the king the tone naturally changes, and conversational prose (see p. 250) gives place to verse.

Raleigh makes the happy criticism that Shakespeare's "opening scenes are often a kind of postulate, which the spectator or reader is asked to grant...given these persons in this situation, such and such events will follow. Let it be granted that an old king divides his realm"... The question is, *what will be the result?*

29. *darker*, more secret, i.e. than the question of Cordelia's betrothal. He has just sent for "France and Burgundy," and the object of his summoning them, namely, to give them a final answer (41), might be readily surmised by the court; whereas his design of partitioning the kingdom had been communicated only to intimate counsellors like Gloucester and Kent. Johnson, however, paraphrases: "We have already made known in some measure our desire of parting the kingdom; we shall now discover [i.e. reveal] what has not been told before, the reasons by which we shall regulate the partition."

31. *fast*, firm, fixed; = "constant" in 36.

35. *Albany*. Scan *Al|bany*, the last two syllables being redundant, as sometimes occurs before a pause. "Polysyllabic names often receive but one accent at the end of the line in pronunciation"—*Abbott*. So *Gón|eril* in 46 and *Cordélīa* in 70.

37. *several*, respective; see G.

38, 39. *France...Burgundy;* the names of countries often stand for their rulers; thus "Milan" in *The Tempest* bears indifferently the senses 'duchy' and 'duke' of Milan. *rivals;* see G.

41—46. The first lines of the play and again of Lear's speech (cf. "we *have* divided") show that he has already decided the division of his kingdom, nor does he wait to compare the professions of his daughters before awarding her portion to each. Hence this public trial of his daughters' professions of affection is really a way of ministering to his vanity. "The trial" (says Coleridge) "is but a trick; and the grossness of the old king's rage [i.e. against Cordelia] is in part the natural result of a silly trick suddenly and most unexpectedly baffled and disappointed."

42. *both;* often used of more than *two* things by Elizabethans; cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 747, "Both favour, savour, hue and qualities."

46. *challenge*, lay claim to *it*, viz. the bounty: it shall be bestowed in the quarter where natural affection together with general merit makes the strongest claim to it. Some take "with merit" as an adverbial phrase = deservedly. The reading adopted is that of the Folio. The Quartos have *Where merit doth most challenge it:* a weaker reading.

49. *space*, i.e. space in general, the world.

51. *No less than life.* So in the similar story in the *Gesta Romanorum* the eldest daughter says "I loue you as mych as myne owne lyfe" (Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Library*, I. 2. 318). Cf. too Holinshed's account (see p. 236), and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, II. 10. 28.

life, with grace, i.e. life endowed with grace = natural charm, attractiveness.

52. *found*, found *love* in his child.

54. *so much;* referring to the measures or definitions of her love just mentioned.

55. *do;* so the Quartos; the Folio *speak*, which hardly accords with "love and *be silent*" (best taken as infinitives, not imperatives).

56, 57. *these...this.* Pointing to "the map" (30) before him.

champains, plains; see G.

59—61. His two elder daughters have married recently, no doubt.

61. *dearest;* he did not use any similar epithet in addressing Goneril; we shall see later that he leans more to Regan.

62—70. Observe the rhetorical, fanciful style ("prize me at her worth," "most precious square of sense," "felicitate"). Assumed feeling naturally tries to disguise its unreality by fine-sounding phrases. The same characteristic, though in a somewhat less degree, marked Goneril's speech (48—54). That he should accept these extravagant protests of affection is in itself a sign of Lear's senility; and he looks for something still more ecstatic from Cordelia (79, 80), as though her sisters had not already "made speech unable" to profess more.

62, 63. So the Quartos. The Folio has *I am made of that selfe-mettle as my sister* (i.e. *one* line), where *self* = same, as in IV. 3. 34, and often in Shakespeare.

64. *prize me at her worth;* "think myself as worthy of your favour as she is"—*Henley.*

65. *very deed of*, the exact truth about, real state of; *deed* conveying the notion 'truth,' 'reality,' which we get in the phrase 'in very deed,' where the notion 'doing' is quite lost.

66. *Only she comes too short*, only she falls short of me *in this respect that I* etc. *that* = in that, inasmuch as.

68. *square of sense*. Various interpretations have been suggested, e.g.: "the four nobler senses, *sight*, *hearing*, *taste* and *smell*"; "the full complement of all the senses"; "the compass, comprehension," of sense; "the choicest estimate of sense." The last explanation seems to me best, though it gives a somewhat unusual force to "square"; still the verb seems to mean 'to judge,' in *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 2. 132. For *possesses*, the reading of the Quartos, the Folio has *professes* (? repeated by mistake from 66)—the difference being 'all joys which the choicest estimate of sense *actually* has, i.e. feels, is capable of,' and 'professes to feel.' I think that *professes* strikes a wrong note, that Regan does not mean to doubt the reality of "the joys" of sense but to emphasise the fact that *she*, unlike others, is an enemy to them because she knows the higher joy of loving and being loved by Lear: in fact, the greater "the joys," the greater her devotion which rejects them utterly for her father's sake.

69. *felicitate*, happy; see G.

71. *not so*, not "poor," i.e. not in love, though in words.

72. *More richer*. Double comparatives and superlatives, a form of "Elizabethan emphasis," are frequent in Shakespeare; see p. 253.

For *richer*, the reading of the Quartos, the Folio has *ponderous* = 'of more weight,' i.e. worth, value.

75. *No less;* cf. Gloucester's first speech (3—6). *validity*, value.

77. The Quartos have *the last, not least in our deere love*, and omit from *The vines* down to *interess'd.*

The Folio has *our last and least, to whose young love*, and gives the next line and a half, which the Quartos omit.

"Last, *not* least" was then a proverbial and complimentary phrase, "not least" being a *meiosis* which implied full equality, if not superiority, to those with whom the person addressed, or spoken of, was compared. The phrase is used in *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 189, Spenser's *Colin Clouts Come Home Again*, and other Elizabethan works; see too *Paradise Lost*, III. 277, 278.

Some editors, however, prefer the reading of the Folio, "*our* last *and* least," though they differ as to the meaning of "least"; some interpreting it 'yoūngest,' while others refer it to Cordelia's personal appearance and compare "that *little* seeming substance" (193).

The objection, I think, to "last *and* least" is that it would at once suggest the proverbial "last, *not* least," and to take a proverbial phrase,

alter its form by one word, and give it an entirely fresh sense is surely most confusing—witness indeed the disagreement of those who follow the Folio as to what that sense is.

78. *milk*, i.e. pastures. "In ascribing vines to France, and not to Burgundy, Shakespeare may have thought of the pastoral countries of Southern Belgium as forming part of Burgundy (as they did till the death of Charles the Bold, 1477), otherwise we should not understand the distinction; as in the French Burgundy wine-growing was of very old standing; the arms of Dijon and Beaune have a vine upon them"—*Moberly*.

79. *interess'd*, having an interest in, implying 'allied to.' The Folio has *interest*, possibly short for *interested*, but most editors adopt Theobald's change *interess'd*; see G.

81, 83. The curtness of Cordelia's answer and her persistence in it have been censured by some critics, who see in her bearing a touch of her father's imperious temper. But her conduct is intelligible, if not tactful. She is shocked at the glib professions of her sisters, whom she knows too well (263—270), and disgust drives her to the opposite extreme: *she* will have no part in such hypocrisy. Again, strong, loving natures (and her conduct here proves the strength of Cordelia's character, while the close of the play reveals its power of loving and inspiring love) do not talk about their feelings; they *cannot* heave the heart into the mouth, least of all in public and for a motive such as Lear had mentioned (79, 80). "Great grief does not speak," and so with great love.

When, at length, Lear's rebukes force Cordelia to offer some explanation of her silence, note the simple style in which it is clothed: an intentional contrast to the florid speeches of Goneril and Regan.

84. *Nothing will come of nothing; e nihilo nihil fit;* cf. again I. 4. 127, "nothing can be made out of nothing."

87. *bond*, obligation, i.e. as a child. In the old play of *King Leir* (Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Library*, II. 2. 315) the youngest daughter, 'Cordella,' says:

> "I cannot paynt my duty forth in words,
> I hope my deeds shall make report of me:
> But look what loue the child doth owe the father,
> The same to you I beare, my gracious Lord."

Cf. also the reply she makes in Holinshed (see p. 237).

88, 89. *mend...mar;* a proverbial contrast; see the note on I. 4. 342.

Good my lord; a frequent inversion of the order in forms of address, designed perhaps to give emphasis to the adjective; cf. 99, 114.

91. *those...as;* cf. I. 4. 57, 58, "with *that* ceremonious affection *as* you were wont." The sequence *that as* (where *as* possesses almost the force of a relative) is perhaps a combination of two ideas—'that which' + 'such, so great, as.' It is common in Shakespeare.

95. *plight*, plighted troth; see G.

102. The speech brings out Lear's wild impulsiveness that borders on insanity. Barely tarrying even to chide Cordelia (much less to understand and weigh her motives), and holding out no hope of forgiveness should she repent, he once for all flings her off for ever ("my *sometime* daughter"), although a few minutes ago such a thought would have been inconceivable to him. His treatment of Kent, the long-tried and trusted friend, is similar. Passion (innate and fostered by kingship) has become a disease in him and makes him almost irresponsible.

103. *the sacred radiance of the sun.* "The Druidical gods are, according to Cæsar (*Bell. Gall.* VI. 17), Apollo, Mars, Jove, and Minerva. Lear's two oaths, by Apollo and Jupiter, are therefore historically accurate: so is his swearing by Night, as (c. 18), 'Galli se omnes ab Dite patre prognatos prædicant,' and by Hecate, as a temple of Diana once occupied the place of the present St Paul's in London"—*Moberly*. Cf. II. 4. 20, 21.

104. *mysteries;* so the 2nd Folio; the 1st has *miseries*, and the Quartos *mistresse.*

Hecate, the goddess of hell and sorcery; hence introduced as the patroness of the Witches in *Macbeth* (III. 5, IV. 1). The name is always treated as a dissyllable (*Hecat'*) in Shakespeare (except in the doubtful play 1 *Henry VI.* III. 2. 64); cf. *Macbeth*, II. 1. 52. So often in poetry (especially Elizabethan); cf. Milton, *Comus*, 135; Byron, *Childe Harold*, II. 22, "Alike beheld beneath pale Hecat's blaze."

105, 106. Referring to the astrological beliefs in the "influence" of the stars on men's lives. Cf. Edmund's speech ("This is the excellent foppery"), I. 2. 111—122, with the notes.

108. *Propinquity*, blood-relationship. *property*, ownership.

110. *from this*, i.e. time; cf. "by this" = by now, IV. 6. 45.

The...Scythian; a type of barbarism. Cf. *Titus Andronicus*, I. 131, "Was ever Scythia half so barbarous?"

111. i.e. or he who (cf. the story of Thyestes) makes food of his children—those whom he has *generated*, 'offspring.'

114. *sometime;* for the adjectival use ('former') cf. university-phrases like 'sometime scholar, fellow.' *liege;* see G.

116. *his wrath*, the object of his wrath.

117. *to set my rest;* a phrase drawn from a game of cards (*primero*) = 'to venture one's final stake, to stake one's all' (*rest* being the stakes kept in reserve); whence figuratively 'to depend upon,' 'to stake one's hopes upon.'

Do these lines show (as Bradley thinks) that Lear never had any intention of living with each of his three daughters in turn? that "he meant to live with Cordelia, and with her alone," but was forced by what he considers her undutifulness to adopt the other plan (126—129)?

118. *nursery*, tender care; not elsewhere in this sense.

Hence, and avoid my sight! Addressed, I think, to Cordelia, not Kent. Speaking *of* her Lear might well look towards her, and so break out into a passing expression of disgust. No doubt, it is inconsistent with what follows closely—"Call France," "Call Burgundy"—for if Cordelia did go away the presence of her suitors, with whom Lear means to settle the question of her betrothal, would be useless. But consistency is not to be expected in the king's moods.

120. *who stirs?* this shows the utter astonishment of the courtiers at his extraordinary conduct. They have been too amazed to move.

122. *digest*, dispose of, arrange. Schmidt says 'enjoy.'

123. *Let pride...marry her;* since she will have no other dower to get her a husband ("marry her").

125. *effects*, manifestations of power.

130. *additions to;* outward honours paid to; or perhaps 'titles belonging to' (cf. II. 2. 20).

"Albany and Cornwall are invested jointly with the royal power, but Lear retains 'the name and all the additions to a king.' He can part with the reality of rule, but his weak nature clings to the ceremonial show, which had been so worthless in the eyes of a Henry V."—*Boas.*

131. Shakespeare scans both *revénue* (as here) and *révenue*, the modern accentuation. Cf. *retínue* I. 4. 195, note.

the rest; i.e. all other regal offices and duties.

137. *make from*, stand out of the way of.

138. *fork*, barbed arrow-head; the ordinary name was 'forkhead.' Cf. *As You Like It*, II. 1. 24, 25, "with forked heads...gored" (said of deer wounded by archers).

139. The line has two extra syllables, *unmán|nerly*. Abbott

compares *mi|racle* in 217, II. 2. 158. Sometimes this occurs in the middle of a line before a pause.

140. *What wouldst thou do?* "This is spoke on seeing his master put his hand to his sword"—*Capell.* Cf. again the stage-direction below (155).

143. *Reverse thy doom*, i.e. sentence, decree. This is the reading of the Quartos; the Folio has *reserve thy state*, i.e. keep, do not resign, this regal power.

Reverse thy doom seems to me the more effective because the more comprehensive reading; it makes Kent dissuade Lear not only from abdication but also from his proposed unjust treatment of Cordelia, the point on which Kent seems to feel much more strongly. For note the direct reference to Cordelia in the next lines; also that in the conversation with Gloucester at the beginning Kent did not condemn the king's purpose of abdication, nor did he make any protest till Lear cast off his "sometime daughter," when he instantly began to remonstrate ("Good my liege," 114). We may regard "revoke thy doom" in 159 as an intentional, and surely effective, piece of repetition.

145. *answer*, i.e. let my life answer *for;* he will stake his life on the correctness of his judgment.

147, 148. Kent has little belief in Goneril and Regan's "large speeches"; cf. 179, 180. *low;* said perhaps with a personal reference; see v. 3. 273, 274. *Reverbs*, reverberates, echoes.

148. In the old play the courtier Perillus, who answers to Kent, makes intercession for Cordella, but Leir says (Hazlitt, p. 323):

> "Vrge this no more, and if thou love thy life:
> I say, she is no daughter, that doth scorne
> To tell her father how she loueth him."

149. *pawn*, pledge; see G.

150. *To wage;* "to stake in wager"—*Dyce.*

153. *blank;* the white mark (*blank*=F. *blanc*) in the centre of a target, hence 'aim.' "See better," says Kent, "and keep me always in your view"—*Johnson*, i.e. have regard to my advice. The metaphor seems suggested by 137, 138.

155. "Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish king, who will nō more be admonished"—*Ecclesiastes* iv. 13.

159. *doom;* so the Quartos; the Folios *guift* or *gift*. See 143, note. I see no necessity to limit "thy doom" to Lear's sentence upon Cordelia and to suppose that Kent "simply pleads" for her; I think that

it refers also to Lear's abdication: observe how the *two* subjects are linked together in his last long speech (117—133).

164. *strain'd*, excessive; so the Folio; the Quartos have *straied*= "exorbitant, passing due bounds"—*Johnson*.

165. *power*, viz. of carrying the "sentence" (decision) into effect.

166. *Which*, i.e. that anyone should "come between" etc.

167. *Our potency made good*, our power not being lost. 'You thought us unable to execute our sentence, but our power is maintained, as you shall learn by the "reward" that your conduct shall receive.' Of course, the king forgets his purposed abdication, but the inconsistency is characteristic and effective; it shows "Lear's moral incapacity of resigning the sovereign power in the very act of disposing of it"—*Coleridge*. For *make good*=to maintain cf. *Henry VIII*. v. 4. 57. Instead of *made* the 2nd Quarto has *make*, which yields rather a different sense—'justify, prove, our power by accepting your punishment.'

169. *diseases*, inconveniences, troubles. The Folio has *disasters*, probably because the printer did not understand the (old) use of *disease*. Cf. 1 *Henry VI*. II. 5. 44, "And, in that *ease*, I'll tell thee my *disease*" (=trouble), and see II. 4. 34, note. Kent is to have "time to settle his affairs, and to make provision for his exiled state"—*Malone*.

171. *tenth;* an obvious change is *sev'nth*.

174. *This shall not be revoked;* said with grim emphasis, in ironical allusion to Kent's "*revoke* thy doom."

175—182. This speech brings Kent's share in the scene to a close, and its rhyme has much the same effect of formal leave-taking as the rhymed couplet which we get so often at the end of a scene (cf. I. 2. 170, 171). Also it is designed to give a certain ring of epigram, each couplet being a terse, sententious summary of what is passing through Kent's mind as he turns towards each of the persons addressed.

175. *sith*, since. *thus*, i.e. so self-willed and despotic.

179. i.e. and may your deeds make good your professions.

182. "He will follow his old maxims; he will continue to act upon the same principles"—*Johnson;* or simply his "old age must be finished in a new country"—*Furness*. Perhaps the form of the couplet was proverbial; Steevens quotes Peele's *Battle of Alcazar* (1594), II. 4, last lines:

> "Saint George for England! and Ireland now adieu,
> For here Tom Stukeley shapes his course anew."

183. *Here's France and Burgundy*. A singular verb *preceding* a

plural subject is common in Shakespeare, especially 'here is,' 'there is.' Cf. *Cymbeline*, IV. 2. 371, "There is no more such masters." Coming first, before the plural subject has been mentioned, the singular verb appears less unnatural. It is as though the speaker when he said 'here is' had not quite decided what the subject should be. Also where the subject consists of two nouns (as here) the tendency is to "attract" the verb to the nearer.

185, 186. *you, who...hath.* Dr Abbott says: "The relative (perhaps because it does not signify by inflection any agreement in number or person with its antecedent) frequently (1) takes a *singular* verb, though the antecedent be *plural* and (2) the verb is often in the *third* person, though the antecedent be in the *second* or *first*"—i.e. in Shakespeare. He compares II. 4. 270, "If it be you that *stirs*" (as the Quartos and Folio read).

The fact is, there is a tendency in Elizabethan writers towards constructions 'according to the sense' rather than the strict grammar. Thus if we analyse cases of a singular verb after a relative referring to a plural subject we find often that the sense is singular—e.g. 'you *the lover* who hath rivalled,' and 'if you be *the power* that stirs.' We should remember too that *-th* and *-s* were plural inflections in the Southern and Northern dialects respectively of Middle English (see pp. 251, 252).

187. *present*, immediate, to be paid down at once.

191. *so*, worth so much, i.e. as he had "offered" (189) in the way of dowry; or perhaps referring to "dear" with a play on the two senses 'loved' and 'of high price.'

193. *that little seeming substance*, that small piece of speciousness. The original editions have no comma after "little" (a contemptuous reference to Cordelia's appearance), nor need there be any, because "seeming substance" is a sort of antithetic compound = apparent substance, pretended reality. Lear means that she is a mass of hypocrisy, utterly unreal and unreliable. It is also possible to take *little* adverbially, = by no means seemly (a disparagement of Cordelia's beauty); but this way loses the antithesis between "seeming," in which the radical idea is 'specious, unreal,' and "substance."

194. *pieced*, supplemented; 'with our displeasure to boot.'

195. *like;* in the original sense 'to please'; cf. 'if you like,' an impersonal phrase = if it please you. See II. 2. 83.

197. *owes*, has; see G.

199. *stranger'd with our oath;* see 103—110 (especially 109).

201. *makes not up*, does not come to a decision.

203—208. The intensity of Lear's bitterness against Cordelia is shown in his even dissuading her suitor. His conduct is a fine illustration of the truth that

"to be wroth with one we love
Doth work like madness in the brain."

205. *To;* for the omission of *as* cf. 212. *beseech you;* the omission of *I* in such phrases of address is common; cf. *prithee* = I pray thee.

206. *more worthier;* see p. 253.

209. *your best object*, the delight of your eye.

210. *argument*, subject; see G. *balm of your age;* cf. 117, 118.

211. *Most best;* see p. 253. *trice*, moment; see G.

212. *dismantle;* cf. the metaphor in 'divest' (Lat. *vestis*, a garment).

214, 215. i.e. must be of so unnatural a character that it (the character, "degree") makes the offence monstrous.

216. *Fall'n;* supply "must be" from 214. The Folio has *fall*, but France means that Lear's affection must already have 'decayed.'

219. *If for I want*, if it is because I lack; implying 'that you treat me thus.' She speaks hurriedly, eager that France should not be under any misapprehension, though he had clearly shown that his belief in her was unshaken (216—218). *for* = because; cf. I. 2. 5.

that...art, i.e. such as her sisters had shown.

222. *murder;* so the Quartos; the Folio *murther* (a common form). Collier ingeniously suggested that *murther or* was a corruption of *nor other*, and a few editors follow him in printing, "It is no vicious blot, *nor other* foulness." Certainly it is a little strange that Cordelia should suppose that anyone would credit her with "murder"; yet we must remember France's very strong expressions in 213—215, where he said that if some "offence" of hers *had* caused the change, it must be something "of unnatural degree."

223. *dishonour'd*, dishonourable; cf. V. 1. 9.

225. Here again some words must be understood, e.g. 'I am deprived' from 224.

226. *still-soliciting*, always-begging. Cf. "the still-vexed Bermoothes," i.e. continually disturbed by storms, *The Tempest*, I. 2. 229. The radical meaning of the adjective *still* is 'abiding in its place'; hence = 'constantly' as an adverb.

234. *regards*, considerations (such as that of a dowry).

235. *the entire point*, that which is really the whole point to be thought of; practically *entire* = essential.

243. *Since that; that* is often in Shakespeare added to conjunctions without affecting the sense; cf. 'though *that*,' 'if *that*,' 'for *that*' (I. 2. 5). There may be an ellipse, e.g. 'since *it is the case* that.'

249—256. Here, as in 175—182, the rhyme points to the close.

253. *waterish Burgundy*. The "hot-blooded France" (II. 4. 208) despises his cold, calculating rival, and so by *waterish* he probably means 'watery, thin,' in reference to the wine Burgundy, though the sneer seems hardly appropriate to the wine. The word also signifies 'well-watered,' as the district of Burgundy is; but "France" would not compliment the duke.

254. *unprized*, not valued, i.e. by others, though "precious" to him: an antithesis lost by taking *unprized* = invaluable, priceless.

255. *unkind;* perhaps with the double notion 'unnatural' and 'hard-hearted'; cf. III. 4. 69.

256. *here...where;* treated as nouns; 'this place,' 'a better place.'

260. *benison;* see G.

263. *The;* changed by some editors to the more natural *Ye*. Schmidt, however, shows that *the* was used before the vocative; cf. *Coriolanus*, I. 6. 6, "*The* Roman gods! lead their successes," where the same change to *Ye* has been usually made. So in *Pericles*, III. 1. 1, where "*The* god," not "*Thou* god," is the old reading.

wash'd, i.e. by tears.

264. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I. 5. 269, "I see you what you are." The relative clause is a redundant object explanatory of the direct object, "you." So in *Luke* iv. 34, "I know thee who thou art."

267. *professed;* she hints her disbelief in their protestations of love; cf. 219, 220. And this disbelief, we shall find, makes her keep an indirect watch over her father (III. 1). *bosoms*, affections.

269. *prefer*, recommend.

273. Perhaps we may take *alms* = alms-giving, and explain *at fortune's alms* = at the alms-giving, i.e. through the charity, of fortune.

274. 'And you well deserve the want that (a cognate accusative) you have wanted, i.e. that has befallen you': a reference to the loss of her dowry,—cf. the previous taunt of poverty, "at fortune's alms." Theobald, however, explains: 'you well deserve to meet that *want of love* from your husband, which you have professed to want for our father' (rather, 'in which you have shown yourself deficient'). For "the *want*" (Folio) the Quartos have "the *worth*": surely a mere repetition of "are *worth*" by mistake of the printer.

275. *plighted*, folded; see G. The Quartos have *plaited*.

276. Henley quotes *Proverbs* xxviii. 13, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper."

Who, those who. The Quartos and Folio have *covers*, an illustration possibly of what is said above in the note on 185, 186; but most editors treat it as an error for *cover*. The Folio has "*with* shame" and omits *them*, i.e. time (275) derides with shame those who cover etc.

278—301. Goneril is a stronger character than Regan, with more originality of mind and power of initiative. So here it is she who sees the trouble before them and proposes to meet it. Regan merely echoes her sister's words, and would "further *think*" of the matter. "We must *do* something" is a characteristic retort.

The interview between the sisters is of great importance (1) as foreshadowing their conduct towards Lear, (2) as confirming and illustrating the impression of his character which the earlier part of the scene has made: note particularly the references to his "rashness," "unruly waywardness," "unconstant starts," "dispositions." At the same time, from the point of view of the play's construction, it seems a little artificial to make them remain behind thus instead of leaving with Albany and Cornwall.

286. *grossly*, plainly, palpably.

289. *The best...of his time*, the best years of his life; cf. I. 2. 42.

291. *long-ingrafted condition*, qualities deep rooted through long habit.

294. *unconstant starts*, capricious whims and freaks; 'fits and starts.'

296. *There is further compliment of leave-taking;* and so, while Lear is thus engaged, she and Regan will confer.

297. *hit together*, agree together, i.e. on a common line of action.

298, 299. *with such dispositions as he bears*, with his usual impulsiveness. *bear* = to have, be endowed with; a common meaning.

299. *offend;* in the strong sense 'harm.'

301. *i' the heat*, i.e. strike while the iron is hot.

Scene 2.

The time, according to Mr Daniel's Time-analysis, is the day after that on which the first Scene occurred; "to-night" in 19 meaning 'last night,' as often—cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, II. 5. 18, "For I did dream of money-bags to-night." That it cannot mean 'this present

night' (i.e. that the interview is taking place in the daytime) is shown by Edmund's promise to satisfy his father "this very evening," 87.

1—17. In this remarkable speech Edmund tries to make himself believe that he is the enemy of society merely because society has made him suffer for his illegitimacy; he poses to his conscience as the victim who seeks the "wild justice" of revenge for wrongs. We are reminded how even Iago, in whom malignity reaches its highwater mark, pleads *his* grounds of complaint against Othello. Self-excuse, in fact, is "the last infirmity" of villany.

Thou, nature, art my goddess; since he is 'a natural son,' not one "by order of law" (I. 1. 13). As society is against him he is not responsible, he thinks, to its "custom," but has the freedom of man in a 'natural,' uncivilized state.

3. *Stand in the plague of;* perhaps = submit to the vexation of; but *plague* is very suspicious. *Stand in;* the notion may be 'stand quiet in,' hence 'acquiesce, submit.'

4. *curiosity*, scrupulousness, fastidious feeling. Scan as three syllables *curios'ty*. *deprive*, disinherit.

5. *moonshines*, months. Note that Edmund protests as both a younger and an illegitimate son. Bacon in his Essay *Of Envy* says: "Deformed persons and eunuchs and old men and bastards are envious: for he that cannot possibly mend his own case will do what he can to impair another's, except these defects light upon a very brave and heroical nature."

16. *top the legitimate.* The Quartos have *tooth'*, the Folio *to' th';* the excellent correction is due to Capell. *top*, i.e. rise above.

19. *subscribed*, surrendered; used intransitively = 'to yield' in *Troilus and Cressida*, IV. 5. 105, and elsewhere. Literally 'to sign one's name' to a paper, hence 'to assent to,' and so 'to yield, surrender.'

20. *exhibition*, an allowance; see G.

21. *Upon the gad*, suddenly, 'on the *spur* of the moment.'

33. *o'erlooking*, perusal; cf. V. 1. 48. The device of the letter is a little improbable: "no sort of reason is given why Edgar, who lives in the same house with Edmund, should write a letter to him instead of speaking": and Gloucester should know his son's handwriting—*Bradley*.

40. *essay or taste*, trial or test; see each word in the Glossary.

41. *policy and reverence;* perhaps = politic reverence, the adjective having the notion 'cautious, not going too fast'; or 'policy of reverencing.'

42. *the best of our times*, the best part of our lives; cf. I. 1. 289.

44. *idle and fond;* "weak and foolish"—*Johnson*. *fond;* see G.

46. *suffered*, tolerated.

55, 56. *I found it thrown in;* cf. the papers thrown in at the window of Brutus in *Julius C.* II. 1. 36—38. *closet*, private room.

57. *character*, handwriting; Gk. χαρακτήρ, a stamp, mark.

68. *the father should be as ward.* Note how exactly this describes the position in which Lear has placed himself. It seems intended to emphasise the parallelism between the main plot and the minor.

71. *Abhorred; detested;* in each the termination *ed*=*able*.

77. *run a certain course*, pursue a safe course. *where*, whereas.

82. *pretence*, design, intention; cf. I. 4. 68, "a very pretence and purpose." So the verb='intend' in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II. 6. 36, 37, "I'll give her father notice...of their pretended flight." Cf. Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*, V. 2. 84, "Do but bring this to pass which thou pretend'st."

84. *your honour;* "the usual address to a lord in Shakespeare's time"—*Malone*.

92. *wind me into him*, steal into his confidence, I beg. *me;* the ethic dative (surviving from the old dative), the force of which varies according to the context—'for me,' 'I pray you,' 'look you.' Cf. *The Taming of the Shrew*, I. 2. 11, "knock me at this gate."

93. *unstate myself*, give up my position and fortune, i.e. make the greatest sacrifice.

93, 94. *to be in a due resolution*, to be quite certain as to his meaning. The verb *resolve* often=to satisfy, remove a person's doubts or ignorance on a subject; cf. II. 4. 24.

95. *convey*, manage, implying secrecy; hence its colloquial sense 'to steal,' as in *Richard II.* IV. 317, "O good! convey? conveyers are you all" (i.e. thieves).

97. *These late eclipses;* probably an allusion, pointed out by Mr Aldis Wright, which helps to fix the date of the play. See *Introduction*. There is, I believe, in Shakespeare's plays and in Elizabethan plays generally a considerable element of what has been called 'topical allusion'—allusion, that is, to topics and events of the time, literary customs, pastimes, fashions, current jokes, etc.

Of course, eclipses were proverbially evil omens, the precursors of troubles; cf. *Hamlet*, I. 1. 118—125, *Paradise Lost*, I. 596—599.

98. *though the wisdom of nature;* "though natural philosophy can give account of eclipses, yet we feel their consequences"—*Johnson*.

the wisdom of, i.e. our knowledge of.

99. *thus and thus;* intended apparently as a rather contemptuous phrase; cf. *Cymbeline*, v. 5. 203.

101. *mutinies;* see G.

103. *the prediction*, i.e. as to the evil that would follow "these eclipses"; cf. Edmund's words, 129, 130. Gloucester's superstitiousness (an illustration of the Celtic tone of the play) is emphasised as showing why he does not require stronger evidence before believing in the guilt of the son whom he loves "so tenderly and entirely." For we see (1) that he is naturally credulous and easy to deceive, (2) that he regards Edgar's supposed treachery as one of "the sequent effects" of the disorders in the heavens, and therefore accountable.

104. *bias of nature*, natural tendency; see *bias* in the Glossary.

105, 106. *the best of our time;* he quotes unconsciously from Edgar's supposed letter (42), and speaks as the typical old man (*laudator temporis acti*) whose lament is 'things are not now as they were in *my* day.'

machinations; perhaps a reference to the Gunpowder Plot.

107. *disquietly*, causing disquiet.

111—122. Warburton comments:

"In this play of *Lear* the dotages of astrology are severely ridiculed. I fancy, were the date of its first performance well considered, it would be found that something or other happened at that time [see 97, note] which gave a more than ordinary run to this deceit, as these words seem to intimate: 'I am thinking, brother, of a prediction' etc. [129, 130]. However this be, an impious cheat, which had so little foundation in nature or reason, and such fatal consequences on the manners of the people, who were at that time strangely besotted with it, certainly deserved the severest lash of satire. It was a fundamental in this science, that whatever seeds of good dispositions the infant unborn might be endowed with either from nature, or from its parents, yet if [the time of its birth fell] in with the predominancy of a malignant constellation, that momentary influence would entirely change its nature, and bias it to all the contrary ill qualities: so wretched and monstrous an opinion did it set out with." And this evil "influence" of the stars was supposed to affect not only a man's character at the outset of his life but all his subsequent fortunes. Belief in astrology survived long after Shakespeare's time. Though the idea of "Fate" plays a part in some of his plays, e.g. *Julius Cæsar*, yet the gist of his teaching comes to this, that 'Man is his own Star,' and 'Character is Destiny.' *disasters;* see G.

116. *treachers*, traitors; an old word, not uncommon; cf. *The*

Faerie Queene, I. 4. 41, "No knight, but treachour full of false despight," and I. 9. 32. Cognate with F. *tricher*, to *trick*.

spherical predominance = "planetary influence" in 117. *Predominance* and *influence* (see G.) are both terms belonging to astrology. Cf. *The Winter's Tale*, I. 2. 201, 202, "a planet that will strike where 'tis predominant." (*Strike* = "blast"; cf. "star-blasting," III. 4. 57.)

123. *pat he comes like*, i.e. "just as the circumstance which decides the catastrophe of a play intervenes in the very nick of time, when the action is wound up to its crisis, and the audience are impatiently expecting it"—*Heath*.

pat; catastrophe; see each in G.

the old comedy, i.e. comedies of the old style; implying that in them the decisive event was introduced artificially, i.e. on the *deus ex machina* principle.

124, 125. *cue*, catch-word; see G. *Tom o' Bedlam;* "the common name of vagabond beggars, either mad or feigning to be so"—*Schmidt;* cf. II. 3. 13—20.

Bedlam; of course, a corruption of *Bethlehem*, the great asylum for lunatics, named after S. Mary of Bethlehem.

125, 126. *divisions;* used perhaps with quibbling reference to its musical sense 'variation,' as in the phrase to 'run (or make) division,' said of a singer; cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 5. 29, "Some say the lark makes sweet division."

fa, sol, la, mi. Various explanations have been given (1) that the sequence of notes is unnatural and discordant, hence suggestive of the unnatural "divisions" which the eclipses forbode; (2) that the sequence of notes is meant to represent Edmund's "sigh"; (3) that the four notes are merely intended to show that he sings aloud so as not to appear to be aware of Edgar's approach.

132. *he writes of*, i.e. the author of the "prediction."

succeed, come to pass; see G.

136. *diffidences*, distrustings, suspicions.

136, 137. *dissipation of cohorts;* probably corrupt; perhaps *courts*. From *as of*, 133, to *my father last*, 140, is wanting in the Folio.

138, 139. *a sectary astronomical*, a believer in astrology.

148. Gloucester will interpret Edgar's avoidance of him as a sign of guilt: hence the advice "forbear his presence."

150, 151. *that with the mischief*, i.e. his anger is so great that it would scarcely be appeased by doing actual harm to your person.

152. *Some villain hath done me wrong.* An illustration of dramatic "irony." For the audience there is a significance in Edgar's words of which he himself is quite unconscious.

169. *practices*, plots, intrigues.

Scene 3.

The time is "within a fortnight" (I. 4. 290) after the last Scene.

1. One can understand that the sallies of the Fool would not be to the taste of the ceremonious gentleman-in-waiting. It is significant too that the faithful Fool should be the *immediate* cause of the troubles that now close round his master.

3. "The steward [Oswald] should be placed in exact antithesis to Kent, as the only character of utter irredeemable baseness in S. Even in this the judgment and invention of the poet are very observable; for what else could the willing tool of a Goneril be? Not a vice but this of baseness was left open to him"—*Coleridge*. Yet Oswald has one redeeming trait (IV. 5. 22, note).

5. *flashes;* the word well describes Lear's impetuosity and "unconstant starts."

11. *answer*, answer for.

14. *come to question*, give rise to discussion, which would bring the unsatisfactory state of things to a crisis.

16. *I know;* cf. the conversation of the sisters at the end of Scene 1.

17—21. Omitted in the Folio. *Idle*, foolish.

18. *authorities;* the plural = attributes of authority, powers.

20, 21. There is probably some corruption; note that the line does not occur in the Folio. As it stands, we had best interpret, 'and must be treated with restraints *as well as with flatteries*, when they are seen to be deceived (i.e. by the flatteries).' That is, if they are led astray by flatterers, their true friends and advisers must exercise restraint on them, to keep them in the right path.

Scene 4.

1. i.e. disguise his voice as successfully as his appearance.

2. *defuse*, disguise; properly 'to disorder, so as not to be recognised.' Cf. *Henry V.* v. 2. 61, "defused attire," i.e. disordered. The word is suggested to Kent by the disguise which he is wearing, and on which he looks as he comes forward (Steevens). The word is spelt *defuse*

in the old editions both here and in *Henry V.*, and there is other evidence for the form, though *diffuse* in this sense was commoner.

7. *labours*, viz. on Lear's behalf.

9. *thou;* ordinarily used in addressing inferiors, e.g. by a master to a servant, who replies by *you*: cf. Kent's answers and the Knight's, 57, 58. For a master to say *you* is a sign of annoyance; cf. "you, you, sirrah," 44, to Oswald, whom Lear dislikes, and 76.

11. *profess*, what is thy profession? Kent takes it in the sense 'claim to be.'

14. *in trust*, in a position of trust.

15. *converse*, have my 'conversation' with, associate; the ordinary Shakespearian sense. So in the heading to the 2nd chapter of *Acts*, "Who afterwards devoutly and charitably converse together."

16. *judgment*, i.e. coming before a judge; less probably "the Last Judgment."

17. *to eat no fish;* explained by Warburton as an allusion to the Roman Catholic practice of eating fish on Fridays and therefore='to be no Papist'; he quotes Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*, I. 2, "I trust I am none of the wicked that eate fish a Fridaies." Capell explains it simply, "Kent was a jolly fellow, and no lover of such meagre diet as fish."

24. *Who?* The inflection was often neglected in colloquial speech, as now in *interrogative* phrases like 'who did you see?' Cf. IV. 3. 7.

33. *curious*, subtle; one requiring to be skilfully told.

37. *to love a woman for singing;* perhaps proverbial. "to," *as* to.

42. *knave;* used in the old sense 'boy,' like the cognate Germ. *knabe*, especially as a kindly form of address; cf. "my pretty knave," 93. Also=fellow; cf. 90.

Enter Oswald; the manner of his entrance should be designed so as to give offence to Lear (i.e. free and easy). Furness shows that this was, perhaps it still is, the stage-custom (or 'business,' as the theatrical saying is).

44. *You, you;* repetition of a pronoun is a sign of contempt; cf. "you, sir, you."

45. *So please you;* a conventional form of apology, 'excuse me.'

46. *clotpoll*, i.e. clodpole=blockhead.

53. *roundest*, plainest. "Sir Toby, I must be round with you," i.e. not mince matters, *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 102.

58. *that...affection as;* see I. 1. 91, note.

59. *appears*, i.e. *which* appears; observe the frequent omission in

Shakespeare of the relative after 'there is,' 'there are.' It is an illustration of Elizabethan brevity. See p. 253.

63. *my duty cannot be silent;* cf. Kent's words, I. 1. 141.

65. *Thou but rememberest me,* you only remind me of what I had myself thought. Cf. *The Tempest,* I. 2. 243, "Let me remember thee what thou hast promis'd."

66. *most faint,* scarcely perceptible; just a hint of.

67. *curiosity,* scrupulousness; it implies over-particularity.

68. *very pretence,* deliberate intention; cf. I. 2. 82.

69. *But where's my fool?* These repeated demands after the Fool show how dear he is to his master and thus prepare us for the familiar tone which Lear allows him. They also excite interest in him.

71, 72. *Since my young lady's going* etc. How much light this throws on the characters of Cordelia and the Fool! It wins too our sympathy for the Fool beforehand. We may note Touchstone's intimacy with Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It.*

73. *No more of that.* He cannot bear to hear her spoken of and have his loss brought home to him. The fact proves the idleness of his passionate assertion that she should be "a stranger" to him (I. 1. 109).

78. *"My lady's father"!* Of course Lear expected "The king"; he had specially retained the title.

82. *òandy;* see G.

84. *football;* referred to in *The Comedy of Errors,* II. 1. 83. This passage shows that Elizabethans did not rank it with more exclusive sports such as hawking and coursing, fencing and tennis.

87. *differences,* i.e. to draw distinctions such as Oswald drew between Lear as "My lady's father" and Lear as king.

91. *earnest,* earnest-money; see G.

Enter Fool. In this Scene the main drift of his sallies of wit is to urge the king to resume his power; afterwards, "finding his worst reproaches can avail nothing, he changes his discourse to simple mirth, in order to distract the sorrows of his master."

92. *coxcomb;* the fool's cap, with asses' ears and a cock's crest; originally a mocking copy of the monk's cowl; sometimes it was an ordinary cap with cock's feathers in it.

93. *how dost thou?* The question is prompted by what the Knight has said of the Fool ("hath much pined away"), 72.

94. *you were best,* you had best. This idiom represents an impersonal construction changed into a personal. Thus "*I* were best" (*Cymbeline,* III. 6. 19) would in earlier English have been "*me* were

best"='*to* me it were best.' People misunderstood that (1) *me* was a dative, (2) the sentence was impersonal, and substituted *I*, which seemed more correct. The impersonal constructions so largely used in Old English were becoming less familiar to the Elizabethans.

97. *an;* see G.

98. *catch cold*, i.e. "be turned out of doors"—*Farmer.*

99. *banished two...daughters* etc., perhaps merely a whimsical inversion of what had occurred; or *banished* might imply that "he had lost them as daughters, lost their love and obedience"—*Capell*, i.e. that *they* were now the real "strangers" to Lear's heart, not Cordelia.

101. *nuncle;* said to be a contraction of *mine uncle* and the usual address of a jester to his master.

105. *thy.* It is a sign of his familiarity that he addresses his master almost always by *thou.*

107. *Take heed, sirrah; the whip.* "The whip was certainly ever present in the house that held an official Motley [i.e. Fool], in spite of the boasted license of speech supposed to be enjoyed by the latter. Touchstone is told that he shall be whipped for taxation [satire]"—Doran, *History of Court Fools*, p. 91.

He refers to more than one anecdote and play which illustrates the use of the whip when a Fool's tongue ran on too freely (pp. 93, 182, 196).

109. *Lady the brach.* The Quartos have *Ladie oth'e brach*, the Folio *the Lady Brach.* The slight change is suggested by 1 *Henry IV.* III. 1. 240, 241, "I had rather hear Lady, my brach, howl in Irish." "Lady" is a common name for a hound. *brach*, a female hound (see G.); here of course in contrast to "dog."

111. *A pestilent gall*, said, I think, half lightly but with a touch of displeasure, in reference to the Fool; cf. again 131, "a *bitter* fool." Or Oswald's insolence may still rankle in his mind. *gall;* anything bitter.

117. *owest*, dost possess; see G.

118. *goest*, dost walk; a common sense.

119. i.e. do not believe everything you hear. *trow*, in the literal sense 'to hold *true*' (A.S. *tréowe*). Some take *trow*=to know; i.e. 'always add to your knowledge.'

120. Probably *throw* = throw *for*, i.e. so as to get. The sense seems 'do not stake the whole amount that you wish to get, i.e. do not risk everything on a single try.' Some explain 'stake less than you have just won by the last cast'; but this gives a very forced meaning to "throw."

123. *This is nothing*, i.e. nonsense; cf. to 'talk nothing'=Gk. *οὐδὲν λέγειν*—*The Tempest*, II. I. 170.

127, 128. *nothing can be made out of nothing.* So he had told Cordelia, I. I. 84, and he does not yet see the applicability of the maxim to his own case; but the Fool points it out.

135—150. These lines (from *That lord* to *snatching*) are omitted in the Folio, "perhaps for political reasons, as they seemed to censure the monopolies"—*Johnson.*

140. *presently*, at once.

141. *motley*, the particoloured dress of a Fool; properly 'spotted,' O.F. *mattelé. here;* indicating himself by a gesture.

142. *The other*, the lord who gave you the foolish advice which now proves so "bitter" to you.

147. *will not let me*, i.e. be "altogether fool" (again in *Timon of Athens*, II. 2. 122), so as to leave no folly for others.

148. *had a monopoly out*, i.e. to be the only licensed fool; cf. 'to take *out* a patent.'

Monopolies, i.e. grants giving an individual the exclusive right of practising a trade or manufacturing some article, were a great abuse of the times, hence a frequent object of satire (Steevens). They were granted by the king to courtiers (cf. "lords and great men"), or obtained through their influence at the cost of heavy bribes. The earliest known grant of a monopoly was in the reign of Edward III., but the system first became a serious grievance in Elizabeth's reign. "Lists prepared at the time show that many of the commonest necessaries of life were the subjects of monopolies, by which their price was grievously enhanced"—*Encyclopædia Britannica.* Nominally monopolies were abolished in 1601, but the abuse was equally great under James I., until, in 1621, Sir Giles Mompesson, the most notorious of the holders of monopolies—he is satirised as "Sir Giles Overreach, a cruel extortioner," in Massinger's play *A New Way to pay Old Debts* (1633)—was impeached for his extortions, and the system declared illegal by Parliament in 1624. As the 1st Folio appeared in 1623, the allusion in the Fool's speech would have been too pointed to be prudent. Gk. *μονοπωλία*, exclusive sale, from *μόνος*, sole, only + *πωλεῖν*, to sell, barter.

156. *thou borest thine ass;* an allusion to Æsop's *Fables.*

158. *speak like myself*, i.e. as a fool; his words, he means, are only too wise and true.

160. *had ne'er less grace.* "There never was a time when fools were

less in favour; and the reason is, that they were never so little wanted, for wise men now supply their place"—*Johnson*. For *grace* (favour), the Quartos have *wit*.

169—172. A snatch of some old song (like 191, 192, and 209, 210), perhaps slightly adapted to the occasion. The first couplet, somewhat varied, is found in Heywood's play *Lucrece* (1608).

183. *frontlet*, frown; properly a band for the forehead (Lat. *frons*) such as we see on ancient monumental figures. Steevens quoted very aptly from *Zepheria*, 1594, a collection of Sonnets (see Arber's *English Garner*, vol. v. p. 79):

"But now, my sunne, it fits thou take thy set,
And vayle thy face with frownes as with a frontlet."

Probably Goneril has just seen Oswald and heard his report.

186. *an O;* a mere cipher, valueless unless combined with some figure. The same metaphor is used in *The Winter's Tale*, I. 2. 6—9.

193. *shealed;* for this form of *shelled* ('empty') cf. the cognate words *shale*, a stone that peels off easily, and *scale*, to peel off; also Germ. *schale*, a shell, peel.

peascod, pod, husk of the peas. "The outside of a king remains [in Lear], but all the intrinsic parts of royalty are gone: he has nothing to give"—*Johnson*.

194. Goneril always goes straight to the point, wasting no time in preliminaries and sparing no one's feelings. Note how skilfully her complaint is introduced, viz. in immediate connection with the witticism of the Fool.

this your...fool; understand some words like 'annoys us,' 'is troublesome,' since the verbs in 196 are hardly appropriate to him.

195. *other;* see G. Scan *retínue;* cf. *Paradise Regained*, II. 419, "What followers, what retínue canst thou gain?" So in *Paradise Lost*, v. 355; and in Tennyson, *Aylmer's Field* ("The dark retínue reverencing death") and *Guinevere*.

196. *carp*, find fault, i.e. with the household arrangements.

197. *In...riots;* cf. I. 3. 7. Her complaint against Lear's followers very likely has some justice, on the principle (as Mr Boas remarks) of "like master, like man." Moreover, Lear not only sets them the example of fault-finding (I. 3. 7, 8) and treating her servants ill (I. 3. 1), but seems (199—202) to Goneril to encourage them.

198. *I had thought;* apparently she had remonstrated before.

200. *By what yourself...have...done.* Referring to Lear's treatment of her "gentleman" (I. 3. 1), and perhaps of Oswald (82).

201, 202. i.e. that you countenance this conduct, and promote it by your approval. *allowance;* see G.

202—207. She is threatening Lear, for the first time in her life, and designedly wraps up her menace in rather vague language.

204. *in the tender of*, in our care for. *a wholesome weal*, a proper state of things. Some interpret *weal* = commonwealth (a not uncommon sense; see G.), but she is thinking rather of her own household, which the knights upset so by their "riots."

206, 207. i.e. an offence which under ordinary circumstances would be shameful, but in that case will seem justifiable, nay, prudent action.

209, 210. i.e. the young cuckoo turned on its foster-mother as Goneril has on her father. For *it* = its, see *his* in the Glossary.

Though the court-Fools of Elizabethan and earlier times were privileged jesters and satirists, "it was still necessary, to prevent giving offence, that everything they said should have a playful air; we may suppose, therefore, that they had a custom of taking off the edge of too sharp a speech by covering it hastily with the end of an old song, or any glib nonsense that came into the mind"—*Sir Joshua Reynolds*. It would be impossible, however, always to tell whether the rhymed bits which Shakespeare assigns to his Fool are quotations.

211. *So, out went the candle;* meaning perhaps that Lear's days of power are all over, or that Goneril's speech has, as it were, snuffed him out. Spenser (*Faerie Queene*, II. 10. 30) has a similar thought in describing the king's treatment by Goneril:

> "But true it is that, when the oyle is spent,
> The light goes out, and weeke [*wick*] is throwne away:
> So when he had resigned his regiment,
> His daughter gan despise his drouping day."

Shakespeare may have had these lines in his mind. *darkling*, in the dark; see G.

212. *Are you our daughter?* There is (I think) no touch of irony or anger; merely a dazed bewilderment, which has held him silent for a moment. The sudden revelation of what his daughter is stuns the king; only with self-recovery comes passion.

215. *fraught;* see G.

216. *dispositions*, moods, humours; cf. I. 1. 298. Hamlet speaks of his eccentric behaviour as an "antic disposition," I. 5. 172.

of late; cf. "new," 232. Apparently, his "waywardness" had increased since his resignation. Remorse for his ill-treatment of

Cordelia (cf. 1. 5. 23), craving for the presence he had never before lacked, and perhaps release from the cares of kingship, have produced in him unrest and extra irritability of mood. And while he is in this mood he experiences what he has never known before—opposition. "The tragical situation is prepared for him of meeting with obstacles which will not give way, but from which his passion rebounds upon himself with a physical shock"—*Moulton.*

218. *May not an ass know?* i.e. cannot the stupidest person see when things have got into an absolutely 'preposterous' state? as assuredly they are when a daughter lectures her father thus.

219. *Whoop, Jug! I love thee;* probably a snatch of some song, perhaps its refrain. Here it is an ironical outburst of admiration.

Jug; commonly explained to be a corruption of *Joan* or *Jane*, but Skeat says of *Judith*. It was used as a term of endearment.

222. *notion*, intellect; its only Shakespearian sense; cf. *Macbeth*, III. 1. 83. This is the first hint from Lear's own lips of what becomes so tremendous a feature of the play, viz. his insanity. His words are truer than he suspects.

224—228. The sense seems to be this: Lear asks, 'Who am I?' 'Lear's shadow,' replies the Fool. 'I should like to make out that idea,' answers Lear; 'for ordinary indications, such as my rank, my reason etc. would lead me to suppose that I am a *man* with daughters —a wrong impression, if what you say is true.' It would be a relief to him to find that he is only a 'shadow,' i.e. that he has no daughters, and that the supposed existence of a monster like Goneril is only a nightmare.

225. *Lear's shadow.* In the old play (Hazlitt, p. 339) the king says,

> "Cease, good *Perillus*, for to call me Lord,
> And think me but the shaddow of my selfe."

229. *Which*, i.e. "shadow"; or it might stand for *whom* (=Lear).

231. *admiration*, astonishment; see G. *savour;* one Quarto has *favour*=complexion, appearance; cf. *favour*=face.

236. *disorder'd*, disorderly. *debosh'd;* see G.

240. *graced*, full of dignity.

244, 245. *depend*, be your dependants. *besort*, befit.

250. With characteristic calm Goneril finishes her say.

252. *Woe, that*, i.e. woe to him that.

254. Brandes holds that the main idea of the whole play is the representation of "the vice of black ingratitude."

256. *the sea-monster;* perhaps the hippopotamus (though a

'*river*-monster'), which is said to have been regarded as typical of ingratitude, or the whale. *The* points to some particular creature.

257. *kite;* a term of reproach, the kite being a bird of prey; obviously applicable to Goneril.

261. *worships*, all the dignities.

263. *engine*, instrument of torture; see G.

267. *dear*, precious, i.e. that might have proved so valuable to him. *my people*, summon my train.

269. *It may be so.* He is too much stirred to give a thought to Albany; so again below (291).

270. *dear goddess, hear;* equivalent to three feet through the slow beseeching enunciation of *dear* and *hear* as dissyllables.

Furness quotes from a critic contemporary with Garrick the complaint "that, in pronouncing this denunciation, [he] was too deliberate, and not so quick in the emission of his words as he ought to have been; that he did not yield to that impetuosity which the situation required." But, no doubt, the great actor divined rightly the purpose of the dramatist. The speech is a solemn prayer—Garrick spoke it kneeling on one knee, with eyes uplifted and hands clasped—and demands the measured enunciation of prayer. Delivered slowly, each word drives the terrible imprecation home. Perhaps at the close there should be a quicker movement. It is one of Lear's characteristics that he passes suddenly from one mood to another: now almost calm, as though he strained every fibre of his being to keep down his passion, and then hysterically incoherent with the reaction.

272. *this creature;* no longer his "daughter."

275. *derogate*, degraded; or "dishonored, in opposition to the following 'honour her'"—*Delius*. For the termination *-ate=-ated*, see *felicitate* in the Glossary.

278. *thwart*, perverse. *disnatured*, unnatural.

280. Note the effect of bitterness which the alliteration lends. *cadent*, Lat. *cadens*, falling. *fret;* see G.

281. i.e. all the pains and deeds of kindness lavished on her child.

283. *a serpent's tooth.* The line is proverbial now. Malone compares *Psalm* cxl. 3, "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent," and adds, "The viper was the emblem of ingratitude."

289. *fifty;* Goneril had not told him so; cf. 243. Probably she had given some directions to this effect, and Lear was apprised of the number during his brief absence from the stage.

295. *untented*, incurable; from *tent*, 'to probe a wound,' used in its

secondary sense 'to cure.' See G. The noun *tent*=a roll of linen to probe, i.e. try (Lat. *tentare*).

296. *fond*, foolish, as in I. 2. 44; see G.

297. *Beweep*, i.e. if you do. *ye;* the original distinction between *ye* (nominative) and *you* (objective) was often ignored by Elizabethan writers; we see it in *John* xv. 16, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

300. Observe the 'irony' of his reliance (cf. 249) on Regan: *we* know how ill-grounded that reliance is.

301. *comfortable*, ready to comfort; see G.

306. *Do you mark that?* She knows Albany's yielding character, and so thinks to use Lear's threat of resuming his power (304) as a means of egging on her husband to support her. When he begins, rather timidly, to hint disapproval of her conduct she cuts him short. Their difference of opinion in this Scene is useful in foreshadowing their ultimate relations. Albany, well-intentioned but rather weak, is designed to be a contrast to his wife and Edmund (afterwards her lover). Moreover, as Cornwall is a worthy mate of the odious Regan, it would be monotonous and too symmetrical were both husbands villains.

320. *At point*, always ready; cf. III. 1. 33.

321. *buzz*, whisper; cf. "buzz abroad," i.e. whisper.

323. *in mercy*, at his mercy; "*in misericordia* is the legal phrase"—*Malone* (but *mercy* is from Lat. *merx*, a fine, not from *misericordia*).

324. *fear too far*, let your fears carry you too far, i.e. in her treatment of Lear.

325. *still*, ever, always.

326. *taken;* that is, caught by "the harms."

I know his heart, i.e. that Lear is capable of trying to "resume his shape," 304.

333. *particular*, special, chief; referring to Lear's threat (304), which now seems to be uppermost in her thoughts.

335. *compact it more*, make the whole account more consistent, or simply 'complete.'

339. *attask'd*, blamed, taken to task. The Folio has *at task*= liable to blame. *Task* is the same as *tax*, from Lat. *taxare;* cf. 'to tax' a person with some offence; see III. 2. 16.

342. Probably proverbial; Malone compares *Sonnet* 103:

"Were it not sinful then, striving to mend,
To mar the subject that before was well?"

344. *event*, issue (Lat. *eventus*). 'We shall see how things turn out.'

Scene 5.

1. *to Gloucester.* "He means the town of Gloster, which Shakespeare chose to make the residence of the Duke of Cornwall and Regan, in order to give a probability to their setting out late from thence, on a visit to the Earl of Gloster [cf. II. 1. 23—25, 118—125], whose castle our poet conceived to be in the neighbourhood of that city. Our old English earls usually resided in the counties from whence they took their titles. Lear, not finding his son-in-law and his wife at home, follows them to the Earl of Gloster's castle" (*Variorum Shakespeare*, 1821). This view is generally adopted; yet we must note that elsewhere in the play "Gloucester" always means the Earl, not the city, and I cannot help thinking that Kent was the bearer of two sets of despatches—one ("these letters") to the Earl, the other ("the letter") to Regan.

Another explanation is that Lear sends *two* messengers, and that "go *you*" is addressed to one of his attendants, and his next words—"acquaint my daughter"—to Kent. The Folio does mark a "Gentleman" (i.e. in waiting) as entering with the king.

Bradley justly remarks that in *King Lear* "the localities and movements are unusually indefinite," so that "the steps of the action"—the order of the events—are difficult to retrace in memory. Dealing with vast issues, Shakespeare paid less than his ordinary attention to details.

3. *demand out of*, question arising out of.

10, 11. i.e. because Lear has no brains; hence there is no risk of *his* suffering from "kibes" (sores in the heels) and having to wear slippers.

13. *kindly;* used quibblingly="both affectionately and like the rest of her kind"—*Mason.* Cf. *unkind* in I. 1. 255.

22. *he may spy into;* meaning that Lear should have used his eyes and 'spied' into his daughters' characters.

23. *I did her wrong*, i.e. Cordelia, who, we saw, has seldom been absent from his thoughts since her banishment. Trouble begins to bring home more than ever the sense of his loss and folly.

31. *forget my nature*, i.e. and execute some cruel vengeance.

34. *the seven stars;* the common name for the Pleiades; cf. 1 *Henry IV.* I. 2. 16, "we that take purses go by the moon and the seven stars" (i.e. practise our trade by night). Milton calls them "the seven Atlantic Sisters," *Paradise Lost*, X. 674, because according to mythology they had been the daughters of the Titan Atlas.

37. *To take't again perforce*, i.e. "resume" (I. 4. 304) his kingdom

and power, or perhaps, more precisely, the share assigned to Goneril. The bitter words of the Fool are designed to urge Lear to this course; else they would be mere witlessness or cruelty.

43. *O, let me not be mad.* The fear hinted at in I. 4. 222 begins to take more definite shape. One of the most terrible things where almost all is terrible is the king's consciousness that he is drifting to madness, and that it lies more with his daughters than himself to determine whether or no he shall be mad. They, he feels, can drive him mad if they wish to: hence the pity of his appeal to Goneril, "I prithee, daughter, *do not make me mad*," II. 4. 214. This consciousness of impending insanity is said to be true to life.

ACT II.

Scene 1.

Observe how much of the earlier, wilder action of the tragedy is associated with night: surely, for the symbolical effect. Brandes indeed says: "it can scarcely have been in bright morning hours, scarcely in the day time, that Shakespeare conceived *King Lear*. No; it must have been on a night of storm and terror."

1. *Save thee*, i.e. *God* save thee; cf. "bless thee," III. 4. 57.

8. *ear-kissing*, whispered. *arguments*, subjects, topics.

10. *toward*, coming, at hand; cf. III. 3. 17.

17. *queasy*, ticklish, requiring to be handled carefully.

26. *Upon his party*=on his side; the invariable meaning of the phrase. If Edgar *had* spoken in Cornwall's favour obviously that would be no reason why he should fear Cornwall: hence Johnson's proposal, "*Against* his party, *for* the duke of Albany." The best explanation of the passage as it stands is the one given by Delius, viz. that Edmund tries to confuse Edgar by asking him these unexpected questions rapidly, and to make him think that he is surrounded on all sides by dangers from which immediate flight is his only escape.

Some critics have considered it rather improbable that Edgar should fly instead of staying to clear himself of suspicion and at least have some explanation with Gloucester. But sudden confusion does make even sensible men 'lose their heads' and act very unwisely.

27. *Advise yourself*, consider, tax your memory; see G.

29. *In cunning*, in pretence; as a feint to deceive Gloucester.

31. *Yield: come before my father.* "Spoken loud, so that Gloucester may hear"—*Delius.*

35. *Do more than this*, i.e. wound themselves with the object of drawing blood and drinking a health in it; as did Elizabethan lovers sometimes, to pledge their mistresses. Steevens quotes Marston's *Dutch Courtezan*, IV. 1, "religiously vowed my heart to you, been drunk to your health, eat glasses, *stabbed arms*, and done all the offices of protested gallantry for your sake."

39. A detail that would impress the superstitious Gloucester.

Mumbling of; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, V. 3. 38, "saving *of* thy life." This idiom, not uncommon, represents a combination of two idioms, (1) the verbal noun preceded by the preposition 'a,' or 'on,' or 'in,' and followed by *of*, (2) the present participle governing the noun that follows: e.g. (1) '*a*-mumbling *of* charms'='in the act of doing so,' (2) 'mumbling charms.' It is perhaps best to treat 'mumbling' as the present participle and *of* as a redundant preposition which has survived from the use of the verbal noun. See V. 3. 275.

40. Cf. the old play of *King Leir* (p. 317), "If Venus stand auspicious to my vows," i.e. remain favourable to.

42. *Fled this way.* "A wrong way should be pointed to"—*Capell.*

45. *But that;* for *that* following a conjunction see I. 1. 243, note.

49. *loathly*, loathingly, with abhorrence.

50. *fell;* see G. *motion;* used of the attack in fencing. Fencing was much practised by the Elizabethans, so that its technical terms, which occur frequently in Shakespeare and the works of contemporary dramatists, would be understood at once, whereas now many of them, like the science of fencing itself, are unknown to most people.

53. *when;* some editors change to *whe'r*, a common contraction of *whether;* it gives greater symmetry (*whether...or whether*), but that, surely, is a quality that we do not want here, the broken, disjointed style of the whole speech being intended to indicate Edmund's feigned agitation. It is a natural device, frequently employed.

Roughly, I think we may say that emendations which aim at removing irregularities of structure and, as it were, taming the text, start from a wrong principle. Spoken language has not as a matter of fact, nor is it meant to have on the stage, the regularity of written language.

best, in the best way, i.e. thoroughly. *alarum'd*, roused; see G.

55. *gasted*, frightened; see G.

58. *And found—dispatch*, i.e. "dispatch" is "the word" (IV. 6. 92).

It is the same elliptical turn of phrase as in 63. Here again, so as to make the construction quite 'regular,' we have needless suggestions, e.g. "And, found, dispatch'd"=when found, he shall be dispatched.

59. *arch*, chief, master; cf. its use in compounds.

65. *pight*, fixed, resolved; literally *pitched*. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, v. 10. 23, 24, "tents...proudly pight upon our Phrygian plains." *curst*, angry; see G.

66. *discover*, expose.

67. "*Thou...bastard.*" The taunt expresses the feeling ever rankling in his heart (cf. I. 2. 1—17); but Edgar's conduct to him is the very antithesis of it.

unpossessing; because (unlike his legitimate brother) he would have no legal claim to inherit any of his father's property. In the eyes of the law a bastard is *nullius filius*.

68—70. i.e. would people place any confidence in you or credit you with any virtue etc., so as to believe your word?

70. *faith'd;* a good illustration of Dr Abbott's remark that in Elizabethan English "almost any part of speech can be used as any other part of speech." "Any noun," he adds, "adjective, or neuter verb can be used as an active verb. You can 'happy' your friend, 'malice' or 'foot' your enemy, or 'fall' an axe on his neck."

72. *character;* cf. I. 2. 57, "You know the character?"

73. *suggestion*, evil prompting; see G. *practice;* cf. I. 2. 169.

75. *If they not thought*, if people ("the world") were to be kept from thinking.

not thought; cf. IV. 2. 2, 53, and *The Tempest*, II. 1. 121, "I not doubt he came alive to land."

The inversion is a survival from the old use of *ne*='not' and *not* (a compound of *ne*+*aught*) before the verb. Cf. the old negative verbs *nam*=not am (*ne*+*am*), *nave*=not have, *willy-nilly*=will he, not will he—*nill* being from A.S. *ne willan*, 'not to will.' Shakespeare's not infrequent use of the idiom—perhaps for emphasis—exemplifies the survival in Elizabethan English of ancient usages; see p. 251.

76. *pregnant;* perhaps 'full of force, weight.' Some define its main sense in Shakespeare as 'being full or productive of something,' the context determining what that something is. Others interpret it 'ready' (cf. IV. 6. 204), from the literal notion 'ready to bring forth.' Furness (I think rightly) adopts the former view and paraphrases this passage: "So great are the profits of my death that the spurs to make thee seek it are most powerful, and *teem with incitements* thereto."

77. *Strong*, determined (with a bad sense); the Folio *strange*= monstrous. *fasten'd*, obdurate.

78. *got*, begot. Stage-direction: *Tucket;* see G.

80. *ports;* compare II. 3. 3, and Marlowe's *Edward II.* IV. 3. 22, 23, where the king says that Mortimer cannot have escaped out of the country:

> "He is in England's ground; our portmasters
> Are not so careless of their king's command."

81—83. Other passages show that this method of tracing criminals was in use in Shakespeare's time, as of course it is now.

84. *natural*, filial, not 'unnatural,' as he supposes Edgar to be.

85. *capable*, i.e. of inheriting it in spite of his illegitimacy; a strict legal use of *capable.* Thus the *New English Dictionary* defines the word, "in *Law*, qualified to hold or possess (property, etc.)," and quotes Guillim, *Heraldry* (1610), II. v., "Bastards are not capable of their Fathers patrimony." Gloucester has in mind Edgar's supposed taunt in 67 ("unpossessing").

92. The line may be scanned either by taking *your* as dissyllabic, or by regarding it as a case where an unstressed syllable is lacking in the 4th foot after a pause. Either way gives *your* an emphasis which expresses incredulity—'what *your* Edgar be guilty of such a thing?'

97. *consort*, company; scan *consórt.* It is a line of 4 feet, *madam* being monosyllabic.

98. *though he were ill affected;* if he *was* evil-disposed, treacherous.

100. *expense*, spending. Scan *revénues*, as in I. 1. 131.

107. *bewray*, reveal; see G. *practice;* cf. 73.

111, 112. i.e. use my authority against him in any way you please.

113. *doth;* singular (cf. "itself," 114) because the idea is singular, viz. virtuous obedience.

115. *of such deep trust.* 'Irony.'

119. Regan must be supposed to interrupt Cornwall.

threading dark-eyed night. A quibbling allusion to the eye of a needle; editors compare *King John*, v. 4. 11, "*Unthread* the rude *eye* of rebellion." See also *Richard II.* v. 5. 17.

120. *Occasions...of some poise*, business of some weight. Understand some words like 'are the cause,' i.e. of their "visiting" (118) Gloucester.

poise; see G.; from the 1st Quarto; the 2nd Quarto and the Folio have *prize* (=estimation).

123, 124. *which*, i.e. writings implied in "writ." The 1st Quarto has *lest*, i.e. *least*, the 2nd Quarto and the Folio *best*, only the difference

of a letter. It seems preferable to read *best*, and take *from our home*= while *away* from home. If we follow the 1st Quarto we must explain, 'which I did not think fit to answer from our house,' i.e. while *at* home.

126. *Lay comforts to your bosom;* a polite way of telling Gloucester not to trouble about his own misfortune any more but to devote his attention to *their* business.

Scene 2.

The time is the same night as in the last Scene, but just before the day begins to break, the moon being still up; cf. "yet the moon shines," 26. Other time-references which all point to the period just before daybreak are "good dawning" in line 1, and later on "good morrow," 151; also 156.

Kent and Oswald; "the several messengers" referred to by Regan, II. 1. 124.

1. *dawning;* so the Folio; the Quartos *even* (evening). Various indications, as we have seen, show *even* to be wrong, and it is the sort of slip that a writer might himself make and afterwards correct. "Good dawning" is a peculiar, rather affected phrase, probably meant to characterise the finicking, pseudo-courtier Oswald; cf. the affected phrases used by the courtier Osric in *Hamlet*.

8. *pinfold*, a pound, from which there would be no escaping for Oswald; see G. Probably "Lipsbury pinfold" is a topical allusion (of course clear to Shakespeare's audience) to some real locality, perhaps one associated with boxing-matches (Capell). Nares, however, says, "It may be a coined name, and it is just possible that it might mean the teeth, as being the pinfold within the *lips*"; but one can scarcely suppose that Kent would want to bite Oswald. Collier proposed *Finsbury*.

10. *I know thee not;* because it is not yet light. Or may be that Oswald feigns ignorance, not wanting a second (cf. 1. 4. 83—89) encounter with Kent.

13. *broken meats*, remnants of food, leavings.

14, 15. *three-suited, hundred-pound...worsted-stocking.* These are all terms of contempt specially applicable to anyone who claimed the rank of 'gentleman' with doubtful right to it; exactly expressive therefore of the disdain which, on social as well as personal grounds, Kent, "the Earl," would feel for a pretentious, self-satisfied person like the

steward. Steevens quotes Ben Jonson's *The Silent Woman*, III. 1, where a rich wife, who treats her husband contemptuously, rates him thus: "Who gives you your maintenance? Who allows you...your *three suits* of apparel a year? your four pairs of stockings, one *silk*, three *worsted*...?" and IV. 2, "[They] said thou wert a pitiful fellow... and hadst nothing but *three suits* of apparel."

Probably the yearly allowance of clothes to a servant was *three suits;* cf. III. 4, where Edgar says (82) that once he was "a serving-man" and later (127) in the Scene that he formerly had "*three suits* to his back." Again, "in an age of ostentatious finery like that of Shakespeare," *three suits* would be a meagre wardrobe for a 'gentleman.' Either way (but the former explanation is better) we can see how *three-suited* became a contemptuous estimate.

hundred-pound, i.e. possessed of £100 in all, which was the lowest property-qualification that admitted a man to serve on a jury. It does not mean 'having a yearly income of £100.' Editors quote from Middleton's play *The Phœnix*, IV. 3, "How's this? am I used like *a hundred-pound* gentleman?" and also IV. 2, "her friend can go a' foot like a good husband, walk in *worsted stockings*, and inquire for the sixpenny ordinary" (i.e. put up with a cheap dinner).

worsted-stocking; it seems that in Shakespeare's time everybody who could afford them wore silk stockings, worsted and woollen being held in great contempt.

lily-livered; cf. *Macbeth*, V. 3. 15, "Thou lily-liver'd boy." The liver was regarded as the seat of courage, and a "white," bloodless liver as a sign of cowardice; cf. "milk-livered," IV. 2. 50, = white-livered.

action-taking; "i.e. a fellow, who, if you beat him, would bring an action for the assault, instead of resenting it like a man of courage"—*Mason*. 'Pettyfogging.' So the coward Sir Andrew in *Twelfth Night*, IV. 1. 36, when beaten by Sebastian, says "I'll have an action of battery against him."

16. *glass-gazing;* implying 'vain of his personal appearance.' *superserviceable*, above his work; or 'too officious.'

16, 17. *one-trunk-inheriting;* implying 'beggarly.' Probably *inheriting* = possessing (see G.), whether we take *trunk* = chest, with the notion that *one* trunk was sufficient to contain all his belongings, or = trunkhose. But '*one* trunkhose' is not consistent with "*three*-suited."

20. *addition*, title; cf. I. 1. 130.

24. *Is it two days since...?* a time-reference which shows that Kent

must have taken something over a day in the journey on which we saw him set out (I. 5. 1—6) a little while after his first meeting with Oswald (I. 4. 83—89).

26, 27. *a sop o' the moonshine of you;* probably an allusion to an old way of dressing eggs, called "eggs in moonshine"; Kent's threat being equivalent to some such slang phrase as 'I'll give you a dressing,' or 'I'll cook your hash.'

27, 28. *cullionly*, wretched, contemptible; see G. *barber-monger;* "a fop who deals much with barbers"—*Mason*.

31. *Vanity the puppet;* an allusion to the Moralities or allegorical plays in which personified qualities like Vanity and Iniquity took part —*Johnson*. Cf. 1 *Henry IV.* II. 4. 499, 500, where Prince Hal calls Falstaff "that reverend *vice*, that grey *iniquity*, that *vanity* in years" (the Vice was a stock-character, comic, in the Morality plays). So in the *Jew of Malta*, II. 3. 188, 189, "I'll buy you, and marry you to Lady Vanity." *puppet;* a mere term of contempt.

32. *carbonado*, slice across; see G., and cf. Marlowe's 1 *Tamburlaine*, IV. 4. 43, 44, "Take it up, villain; or I will make thee slice the brawns of thy arms into carbonadoes and eat them."

33. *come your ways*, come on!

35. *neat*. Probably = spruce, implying 'finical, foppish'; cf. 1 *Henry IV.* I. 3. 33, "a certain lord, neat and trimly dress'd... perfumed like a milliner"; and the old play *The Two Angry Women of Abingdon* (1599), I. 2, where a smartly dressed "serving-man," something like Oswald, is described:

> "I'll tell thee, sirrah, he's a fine neat fellow,
> A spruce slave."

Johnson explains "you mere slave, you very slave," giving *neat* the notion 'unmixed, unqualified' (cf. 'neat wine'), which, however, it does not bear elsewhere in Shakespeare.

39. *With you, goodman boy*, i.e. "the matter" is with you = I'm ready to deal with you. *goodman;* a contemptuous address; see G.

40. *flesh*, initiate, literally 'give a first taste of flesh.' Cf. 'to flesh a sword,' i.e. stain it with blood for the first time. The metaphor is from feeding a dog on flesh to make it fierce. Cf. 116.

48, 49. *disclaims in*, disowns; *in*, i.e. share in, responsibility. *a tailor made thee;* perhaps a proverbial joke (worthy of Carlyle); it occurs again in *Cymbeline*, IV. 2. 81—83.

57. *thou unnecessary letter!* Shakespeare uses only eight words (apart from proper names) beginning with *z*. Editors refer to Elizabethan

grammarians who speak of *z* as "seldom seen," *s* being its substitute.

58. *unbolted;* see G. "*Unbolted mortar* is mortar made of unsifted lime, and therefore to break the lumps it is necessary to *tread* it by men in wooden shoes [an obsolete process]. This *unbolted* villain is therefore this *coarse* villain"—*Tollet.* So most editors; but the literal meaning of *unbolted*, viz. 'unsifted,' yields the figurative notion 'unmitigated,' and the latter seems more appropriate here than 'coarse,' since previously Kent charged Oswald with an affectation of refinement, with being a "finical rogue," a "neat slave" etc.

60. *wagtail;* a good type of pertness. Such touches show a poet's observation of nature. Tennyson was a close observer of birds.

67. *the holy cords*, the natural ties of affection. Kent suspects Oswald to have abetted Goneril in her conduct towards Lear.

68. *too intrinse;* no doubt the reading meant by the Folio which has *t' intrince;* the Quartos print *to intrench.* A curious word like *intrinse* was likely to be misread. Probably it means 'close,' i.e. drawn close, tight, from the radical meaning 'inward, intimate' (Lat. *intrinsecus*, on the inside). Cf. *intrinsicate* (from which *intrinse* may be abbreviated) in *Antony and Cleopatra*, v. 2. 307, 308, "this knot intrinsicate...untie," where the sense seems 'drawn tight.' Perhaps *intrinse* and *intrinsicate*, though kindred with *intrinsic*, were influenced by their similarity to *intricate. smooth*, flatter.

69. *rebel;* plural because *every* is treated so ('all passions'), or through a sort of 'attraction' to the plural in the nearer word *lords.*

71. *Renege*, say no; usually 'deny, refuse'; Lat. *renegare.* The word was (perhaps still is in some places) used at whist of a player who could not follow suit. *affirm*, say yes.

halcyon; Lat. *halcyon*, a kingfisher, Gk. ἀλκυών. "The vulgar opinion was that [the dead body] of this bird, if hung up, would *vary* with the wind, and by that means show from what point it blew". This superstition (not extinct even at the beginning of the last century) also applied to a swallow's body. Cf. the Martin's fate in the tale of the Swallow, *The Hind and the Panther*, III. 635—38:

> "High on an oak, which never leaf shall bear,
> He breathed his last, exposed to open air;
> And there his corps, unblessed, is hanging still,
> To show the change of winds with his prophetic bill."

74, 75. *epileptic;* "distorted by grinning." *Smile*, i.e. at. *as*, as if.

76, 77. Probably a proverbial allusion to something in the legends

of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table, *Camelot* being the place where he kept his court. Staunton refers to a story in the *Mort d'Arthur* that three knights went forth on a certain 'quest' connected with the marriage of King Arthur and Guinevere, and sent home to Camelot all the enemies they vanquished on the way, to submit themselves to the king's "grace." If this particular story was so well known as to be proverbial then it might give the key to the present passage. An entirely different explanation is that Camelot was the same as Cadbury in Somersetshire (not far from Glastonbury), and that the moors round Cadbury were famous as a breeding-place of geese. It seems, however, odd that Cadbury geese should be straying on the somewhat distant Salisbury ("Sarum") plain.

Camelot was also identified with Winchester. Cf. the old play, *The Birth of Merlin*, III. 6:

> "We'll hence to Winchester, and raise more powers,
> To man with strength the castle Camilot."

cackling. "Oswald's forced laughter suggests to Kent the cackling of a goose"—*Furness.*

83. *likes*, pleases; cf. I. 1. 195.

90. *constrains the garb*, assumes a blunt bearing not at all natural to him. The ordinary Shakespearian sense of "garb" is 'form, manner'—here manner of behaviour or speech.

94. *These kind of knaves.* The pronoun is 'attracted' to the plural idea of the whole expression; cf. "*those* poor number," *Twelfth Night*, I. 2. 10.

95. *more corrupter;* cf. 141, and see p. 253.

96. *observants*, obsequious attendants. Scan *ôbservants.*

97. *stretch*, strain. *nicely*, with the utmost exactness; see G.

98—101. A burlesque of the affected, courtier style.

aspect; used in reference to its astrological sense = the position of a planet in the heavens and its "influence" (I. 2. 117). On the accentuation—*aspéct*—see the Glossary.

103—106. *he that beguiled you;* an ironical comment on Cornwall's remarks (94, 95): 'he who tried to dupe you under the guise of plain speech was, as you say, a plain-spoken knave.' *which*, i.e. a knave. Kent seems to mean that though he may be "a plain knave," as Cornwall uses the words, yet he will not be a real knave. Perhaps the particular sort of knavery which he has in mind is flattery, and he may intend his words as an intimation to Cornwall not to expect smooth, fawning words from him. *though I should win* etc. Johnson

paraphrases: "though I should win you, displeased as you now are, to like me so well as to entreat me to be a knave." Perhaps, rather, "even though I should so displease you by my bluntness as to entreat me to be a knave (i.e. a flatterer)."

110. *upon his misconstruction*, through misunderstanding me.

111. *conjunct;* the Folio *compact;* either means 'in concert with.'

114. *worthied him*, made him quite a hero; an adjective as verb; see II. 1. 70, note.

116. *in the fleshment*, being fleshed with, having tasted blood through; see 40, note.

117, 118. *None of.* 'These clever rogues never fail to make a dupe of Ajax'=a type of the slow-witted warrior, as in *Troilus and Cressida* (cf. especially II. 1. 1—59), where he is contrasted with the clever rogue Thersites. Another explanation is, "These rogues and fools talk in such a boasting strain that, if we were to credit their account of themselves, Ajax would appear a fool as compared with them"—*Malone.* But Cornwall's angry command "fetch forth the stocks" implies that he thought that Kent had ridiculed him for being duped by Oswald.

the stocks. "Formerly in great houses there were moveable stocks for the correction of servants"—*Farmer.*

128. *till night, my lord; and all night too.* Two great features of Regan's character are her cruelty and restlessness. Whenever anyone suggests something evil, especially something cruel, she quickly suggests something worse, more cruel. She delights in causing and *seeing* purposeless suffering—suffering for suffering's sake. It is the joy in others' pain which marks the true persecutor. Compare especially the terrible scene (III. 7) with Gloucester and her words "the other too" (70). And then she is quick of brain and of tongue; always pushing forward with a sort of alert fiendishness; whereas Goneril is composed and thoroughly business-like in her malevolence, ready to stab anyone to the heart if her schemes require it, but self-restrained and not so wanton in causing pain. The one sister represents the negative principle of absolute want of feeling, the other the active principle of ill-feeling. To my mind Regan is more odious, though less formidable, than Goneril.

132. *bring away;* implying *this* way, hither; cf. our colloquial use of 'along,' e.g. 'come along.'

140. *answer*, be responsible for.

147. *rubb'd*, thwarted, crossed. The metaphor (as in "bias," I. 2. 104) is from bowls, in which the noun *rub* was used of any impediment in

the course, e.g. an irregularity of the ground, which turned the bowl aside; cf. *Henry V.* v. 2. 33, "What rub or what impediment there is."

148. *watch'd*, been awake; cf. *o'er-watched*, tired with being awake, 163.

150. Kent is philosophical over his troubles and says 'a good man must expect reverse of fortune like his neighbours.'

out at heels; cf. 'out at elbows.'

151. *morrow*, morning, see G. The time is now nearly daybreak; cf. 156 and the first note of the Scene. Kent therefore has several hours of confinement before him (cf. 126, 127) even if Regan does not get her way (128).

153. *approve the common saw*, prove the truth of the proverb (which occurs in John Heywood's Collection of *Proverbs*, 1546).

154, 155. The old proverb "out of God's blessing into the warm sun" indicated a change from *good* to bad. Here Kent uses it of the general change in Lear's fortunes brought about by his resignation; not (I think), as some explain, of Lear's "being likely to receive a worse reception from Regan than that which he had already experienced from Goneril," because that change would be from *bad* to worse.

Hanmer said that the proverb was particularly "applied to those who are turned out of house and home, deprived of all the comforts of life excepting the common benefits of the air and sun": hence its appropriateness to the practically homeless Lear. But there is no evidence of this special use; all we know is that the saying indicated any change from good to bad. The best explanation of its origin is perhaps Professor Skeat's, viz. that it "refers to the haste of the congregation to leave the shelter of the church immediately after the priest's benediction, running from God's blessing into the warm sun." Examples of its use in Lyly's *Euphues* (Arber's ed. pp. 196, 320) point to some original connection with religion, e.g. it may have contrasted those who went into church for service and those who stayed outside (Warwick Bond).

158, 159. *miracles;* so the Folio; the Quartos *My wracke.*

Kent thinks it a miracle that Cordelia should have been so "fortunately inform'd" and able to communicate with him.

Possibly the words should be regarded not so much as a reflection on the part of Kent as the dramatist's own way of preparing the audience for something rather improbable. That Cordelia should have heard about Kent's "obscured course" and been able to send him a letter might seem

a little strange, as we have not yet heard (III. 1. 23—25) how she has kept up communication with England.

sees; perhaps = experiences; meaning that it is almost entirely for the wretched that Providence works miracles. Or in the literal sense = perceives; implying that the prosperous are blind to all the miracles of man's existence; cf. Carlyle often on this point.

misery, miserable people; abstract for concrete.

161—163. The general sense is: 'Cordelia will set us free from the present unnatural state of things and redress all misfortunes' ("losses").

and shall find time; the sentence is incomplete, some words like *to deliver us* being required. You may explain the incompleteness by one of three theories: (1) that the text is corrupt, e.g. that a line or more has dropped out; (2) that 161—163 are made up of disjointed scraps of Cordelia's letter which Kent reads with difficulty in the uncertain light; (3) that they are Kent's own words, spoken in the disconnected, drowsy way of a man who is talking to himself and just dropping off to sleep. To me (3) seems far the best. There is nothing in the printing, e.g. no stage-direction such as *Reading*, to indicate (2), and Kent's previous words implied that it was still not light enough for him to "peruse the letter"; while (1) is so easy a way of accounting for every difficulty that to adopt it except in the plainest cases is a confession of weakness.

enormous, abnormal, out of the rule (Lat. *e+norma*); implying 'unnatural, monstrous.'

166. The significance of *Fortune's wheel* is explained by Fluellen in *Henry V.* III. 6. 32: "she [Fortune] is painted with a wheel, to signify to you, which is the moral of it, that she is turning, and inconstant, and mutability, and variation." Cf. v. 3. 175. In prosperous days "forget not the wheel of things: think of sullen vicissitudes, but beat not thy brains to foreknow them" (Browne, *Christian Morals*, III. 16).

Scene 3.

8. *in contempt of*, so as to bring contempt on, or 'debase.'

10. *elf*, tangle into elf-locks. Fairies and elves were supposed to tangle hair, e.g. the manes of horses, during the night. It is one of the tricks attributed to Mab, the Fairy Queen, in *Romeo*, I. 4. 88—91.

14. "Bedlam beggars" or "Abraham-men" were a set of vagabond mendicants in the 16th and early part of the 17th centuries. Some were, and the others professed to be, patients who had been discharged from Bedlam as cured or harmless. An account of them in Dekker's

Belman of London (1608), taken partly from an older 16th century account, shows the extreme accuracy of Shakespeare's description here and in III. 4.

"He [referring to "a halfe naked Abraham-man"] sweares he hath bin in Bedlam, and will talke frantickly of purpose: you see pinnes stuck in sundry places of his native flesh, especially in his armes, which paine hee gladly puts himselfe to (beeing indeede no torment at all, his skin is either so dead with some fowle disease, or so hardned with weather) onely to make you beleeve he is out of his wits: he calls himselfe by the name of *Poore Tom*, and comming neere any body cryes out, *Poore Tom is a cold*. Of these Abraham-men some be exceeding mery, and doe nothing but sing songs, fashioned out of their owne braines; some will dance, other will do nothing but laugh or weepe; others are dogged and so sullen both in looke and speech, that spying but small company in a house, they boldly and bluntly enter, compelling the servants through feare to give them what they demaund, which is commonly bacon, or something that will yeelde ready money" (Furness). See note on IV. 7. 39.

15. *Strike in*, i.e. into. *mortified*, deadened, i.e. insensible to pain.

17. *object*, appearance; cf. our colloquialism, 'What an object!'

18. *pelting*, paltry; see G. The point of the epithet and of "low" (17) is that these Bedlamites sought out lonely habitations like "sheep-cotes" where they could terrorise the few inmates. *sheep-cotes;* see G.

19. *bans*, curses. Properly *ban*=a proclamation, as in 'marriage-bans' (v. 3. 88); from its use in the phrase 'Pope's (or Papal) ban'='excommunication' came the general sense 'curse.'

20. *Turlygod*. It is said that 'Turly*good*' (which some editors read) was a common name for a "Bedlam beggar." The word seems to be connected with *Turlupin*, the name of a fanatical sect in France about the 14th century. These *Turlupins* (later known as "the fraternity of poor men") went about almost naked and raving, and therefore closely resembled the "Bedlam beggars."

21. *Edgar I nothing am*, i.e. if he does not disguise himself—if he remains "Edgar"—he is lost; as "poor Tom" he may at least live.

Scene 4.

Enter Lear. After leaving Goneril and Albany, Lear has evidently gone to the house of Cornwall and Regan (the probable locality of which

we have seen, I. 5. 1, note), learned that they had left that evening for Gloucester's Castle, and followed them.

7. *cruel;* a quibble, of course, on *crewel*=worsted; of which garters etc. were made. Cf. *The Two Angry Women of Abingdon*, I. 2, "His crewel garters cross about the knee." The Quartos print *crewell*. Evidently a favourite pun; editors quote various instances, e.g. Field's play, *A Woman is a Weathercock* (1612), "Wearing of *silk*, why art thou still so *cruel*?'

9, 10. *over-lusty*, saucy, too lively. *nether-stocks*, stockings; another obvious pun. Steevens shows that breeches were then called "over-stocks" and "upper stocks."

23. *upon respect;* "deliberately or upon consideration."

24. *Resolve*, inform; cf. I. 2. 94. *modest*, moderate, reasonable.

29. *post*. In Shakespeare's time the fastest method (about ten miles an hour) of public travel was "posting," i.e. "by means of post-horses, relays of which stood ready for service at fixed stages," usually in the stable-yards of inns. "Post" in Shakespeare always means the swiftest travelling—"post-haste," as we say. See *Shakespeare's England* ("Land Travel"), I. 201, 202.

32. *spite of intermission*, though it was interrupting my business with them. Kent was the first-comer and his letters had the first claim on their notice; but Oswald pushed him and his affair on one side.

33. *presently*, at once; cf. 112.

34. *meiny*, retinue; see G. The word is used several times of the king's train of knights in the *Gesta Romanorum*, e.g. "Gonorelle was anoyede and dissesed [i.e. *diseased*=inconvenienced by, see I. 1. 169, note] of hyme and of his meany," Hazlitt, *Shakespeare's Library*, I. 2. 320.

37. *And meeting;* understand *I* as the subject of "drew"; the parenthesis (39, 40) accounts for the omission.

41. *more man than wit*, more manhood than discretion.

Indeed, his conduct has been ill-advised from his master's point of view. Through him, Regan and Cornwall are even less disposed than before to receive Lear kindly, while the punishment which his plain speech towards themselves and his treatment of Oswald have led them to inflict is an insult to the king which cannot but lead to dissension. It rouses in Lear not only bitter anger but the suspicion that his daughter and her husband have sought to trick him (108—110); he insists on seeing them at once, and thus when they meet, all three are in an angry, offence-taking mood. In short, "whatever chance there might have been of Lear faring better at the hands of Regan than of Goneril

is destroyed by Kent." The incident illustrates what someone has well said, that Lear's daughters are not his only enemies, but that even those who are devoted to him contribute to his troubles, e.g. Kent here, and the Fool and the knights by angering Goneril (I. 3 and 4).

45. Meaning that Lear's troubles are not yet over. No doubt, a proverbial saying. *fly;* appropriate to Regan's leaving home at her father's approach.

49. *bags;* of course, money-bags.

51, 52. *dolours;* for the same quibble (in reference to the money-bags) on *dollars* cf. *The Tempest*, II. 1. 17, 18. *for thy daughters*, i.e. through, because of. Regan's conduct is no surprise to the Fool; cf. his prophecy in I. 5. 17, 18, "She will taste as like this" (Goneril) etc. *tell*, count; see G.

53. *mother;* a name for *hysteria*, which is a 'morbid' condition of the nervous system, much commoner in women than men. Dr Bucknill says, "old physicians constantly call hysteria the rising of the mother." The disease is described under the terms *Mother* and *Hysterica passio* (54) in Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, and the description is generally thought to have suggested these lines, 53—55, which resemble Harsnet's account in other details. (See *Introduction*.)

55. *this daughter;* Cordelia uses the same contemptuous turn of words, v. 3. 7.

60. *How chance...?* The construction 'how does it chance that?' is influenced by the noun-phrase 'by what chance?'

62. *question;* a very silly question, thinks the Fool, because everybody knows that the world (for the most part) deserts the unfortunate—as Lear is now. And then he continues (64—70) ironically, 'if you are so simple as not to know *that*—well, you are probably ignorant of some other elementary facts, e.g. that winter is not the best time for working, that you must let go when a great wheel runs down hill, etc.' Of course, there is an undercurrent of allusion in these pieces of information and advice. Thus "there's no labouring i' the winter" implies 'why trouble about one who has fallen on wintry days?' "led by their eyes" is a hint to Kent to use his; "let go thy hold" gives the way of the world when a man's fortune "runs down a hill." The whole is a sarcastic summary, as *Timon of Athens* is a long illustration, of worldly wisdom in the treatment of patrons and friends in the time of their adversity.

64. *to an ant.* "Go to the ant, thou sluggard" etc., *Proverbs* vi. 6—8.

67. *not a nose among twenty*, i.e. twenty ordinary men (not the "blind" alone), who use their senses.

79, 80. The point lies in the antithesis between "fool" in 79 meaning *really* a fool, and "*the* fool" in 80 meaning him to whom the world applies that title, i.e. Lear's Fool. Loyalty, the Fool means, is true wisdom, and the disloyal "knave," who passes for "a wise man," is really a fool; but do not suppose that the converse is true, i.e. that "*the* (so-called) fool" is a "knave." The distinction might be indicated by printing "the Fool" and "turns fool." An antithesis between a "wise man" and "a Fool" is one of the traditional features of the literature of Court-Fools. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, III. 1. 67—75. *perdy;* F. *par Dieu.*

83. *Deny;* cf. *Richard III.* v. 3. 343, "My lord, he doth deny to come," i.e. refuse.

84. *fetches*, pretexts; see G.

86. *Fetch;* said perhaps in grim reference to "mere fetches."

87. *quality*, temper, character. Gloucester's description of Cornwall (cf. II. 2. 145—147) becomes terribly significant later in the light of his own sufferings at the duke's hands.

91. As Mr Boas remarks, "fiery quality" describes the predominant trait in Lear himself, but he cannot brook it in others, least of all in those whose "service" he has "commanded" hitherto.

94. *Inform'd;* ironically repeating Gloucester's "I have inform'd them" (93).

101, 102. i.e. in sickness we neglect duties which are incumbent upon us in health. *still*, ever, constantly; cf. I. 1. 226.

Coleridge notes the pathos of Lear's attempts to find excuses for Regan, the daughter in whom he had rested special confidence.

105. *more headier will*, too impetuous inclination.

109. *this remotion*, i.e. their leaving home; cf. "this remove," 4. He had thought before that it was "strange" (line 1).

112. *presently;* cf. 33.

114. *cry sleep to death*, i.e. kill sleep (and so awake them) by its noise. *cry to death;* the whole phrase has a transitive force=kill by crying; just as one might say, 'he'll sing you to death.'

117. *the cockney*, the affected woman; see G.

118. *knapped*, rapped; cf. the Quartos' reading *rapt;* see G.

124. A sudden calm falls on Lear, the calm before the storm.

127. *Sepulchring;* with the accentuation of Lat. *sepúlcrum;* cf. *Lucrece*, 805, "May likewise be *sepúlchred* in thy shade." The noun he makes *sépulchre* (as now), except in *Richard II.* I. 3. 196.

129. *naught;* an adjective = wicked, *naughty* (see G.).

tied; an ingenious suggestion is *tir'd*, the word used of a bird of prey (cf. "vulture" in 130) tearing its booty in pieces.

130. *like a vulture;* possibly (as Warburton thought) an allusion to the story of Prometheus, whose liver was devoured by an eagle while he was chained to a rock of Mt Caucasus. See 2 *Henry IV.* v. 3. 145.

135. *Than she*, i.e. knows; though logically Regan means the exact opposite, viz. that Goneril does *not* know how to grudge her duty. But the negative idea is clear: 'You are more likely to fail to appreciate her merits than she is likely to fail in her obligations to you.'

Say, how is that? Regan's taking the part of her sister against him is so utterly unexpected by him that for the moment Lear is dazed.

148. *this*, i.e. his kneeling and pleading to Goneril. *house*, family, here 'family relations,' i.e. between father and child. The Folio has *the use* = the rule, custom.

150. *unnecessary*, superfluous, i.e. has really no right to exist, does so only on sufferance. Of course, ironical.

156. *serpent-like;* cf. I. 4. 283, "sharper than a serpent's tooth."

157. The bare thought of Goneril and her conduct makes him flash out into curses.

158. *young bones;* a proverbial phrase for an 'unborn infant.' His curse therefore keeps the same lines as before, viz. of imprecation upon Goneril's unborn child (I. 4. 276—282). Cf. the old play of *King Leir*, "poor soule, she breeds yong bones, And that is it makes her so tutchy, sure" (i.e. *touchy*, irritable).

159. *taking*, blasting, bewitching. *Take* was "used of the malignant influence of superhuman powers." Cf. "he blasts the tree and takes the cattle," *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, IV. 4. 32; "then...no fairy takes," *Hamlet*, I. 1. 163. See III. 4. 58.

161—163. Cf. I. 4. 294 and Caliban's imprecation, *The Tempest*, II. 2. 1, 2,

> "All the infections that the sun sucks up
> From bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall!"

To fall, i.e. drawn up so as to fall. Possibly *fall* = make to fall, humble; for its transitive use cf. *Lucrece*, 1551, "every tear he falls."

165. Note "*the* rash mood," implying that it was a well-known characteristic, as Goneril had said (I. 1. 289, 290, "the best of his time hath been but rash").

166—177. This speech, in which Lear clings with pitiful desperation to his belief in her, is an epitome of his misunderstandings of

Regan's character. Every one of his statements about her is falsified in what follows. The fact that she is of softer, more feminine bearing than Goneril, has blinded him completely to her true nature. Thus he thinks that "it is not in her to bandy hasty words": yet this in truth is her fault of faults, she cannot refrain her bitter tongue; witness e.g. her odious words in 246. While as for her generosity, on which he counts, cf. 259 ("what need *one?*"). See also 300, note.

167. *tender-hefted.* So the Folio. The explanation commonly accepted now is that *hefted* comes from *heft*, an old form of *haft*, a handle, and that *tender-hefted* means 'set in a delicate handle or frame'; the metaphor being from an ornament (=Regan's "nature") and its setting or frame (=her body). But 'handle' and 'frame' are not the same, and 'handle' is certainly the meaning of *heft=haft.*

Perhaps *tender-hefted* might mean 'which *must be handled* with tender care,' like some fragile article, whence the figurative notion 'delicate, sensitive,' which is suitable here as contrasting Regan with her more masculine sister. The use of the participial termination *-ed=* 'which must be, meet to be' would be quite Elizabethan.

Steevens explained: "*Hefted* seems to mean the same as *heaved.* 'Tender-hefted,' i.e. whose bosom is agitated by tender passions. Shakespeare uses 'hefts' for *heavings* in *Winter's Tale*, II. 1. 45." For *hefted* the Quartos have '*hested*' (cf. *hests*=commands), and 'tender-*hested*' has been interpreted 'governed by gentle dispositions.' Some editors change to 'tender-*hearted.*'

168, 169. *eyes...burn;* cf. Marlowe's *Edward II.* v. 1. 104, 105:

"And Isabel, whose eyes, being turned to steel,
Will sooner sparkle fire than shed a tear";

spoken by Edward of his cruel Queen.

171. *to scant my sizes*, to reduce my allowances. *sizes;* see G.

175. *Effects*, manifestations, actions that show courtesy.

177. *to the purpose;* let us come to the point.

179. *approves*, confirms; cf. II. 2. 153.

This conversation between Regan and Cornwall is not heard by Lear; hence his astonishment at Goneril's entrance, 185. Apparently too he did not notice the trumpet-sound. His thoughts are occupied with the indignity to Kent.

187. See Lamb's criticism (pp. 243, 244); and note a remark there about Shakespeare's own age. *Allow*, approve of; see G.

194. *Will you yet hold?* As though the rising waves of passion that "swell up towards his heart" would burst all bounds. Cf. 53, 54, and

116 ("my heart, my *rising* heart!"). He is moved by the insults in Goneril's speech ("indiscretion," "dotage").

196. *advancement*, promotion; here used with a vulgar levity. All through, Cornwall is brutal, and worthy of his wife.

197. *seem so*, comport yourself accordingly, i.e. admit your feebleness by letting others direct you.

207. *Necessity's sharp pinch*, the hard straits to which Necessity reduces us; *pinch* is in apposition to the infinitives *to wage* (=to struggle, contend) and *to be*.

Some regard this as poor sense, an anticlimax to Lear's outburst; so instead of *owl* in 206, the reading of the Quartos and Folio, they print *howl*, remove the stop at the end of the line, and find then that the passage has "a climax terrible in its wildness: roofs are to be abjured, storms braved, and famine howled forth among wolves." Even if *howl* had any textual authority, one might surely hesitate over the metaphor 'to howl a pinch.' Moreover, as the "owl" is traditionally a symbol of night (it is introduced thus constantly by Shakespeare), the mention of it indicates the time intended and thus adds something to the picture. Rolfe notes that the wolf and the owl are associated in *Lucrece*, 165, "No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries."

212. *sumpter*, pack-horse; see G.

220. *plague-sore;* probably a reference "to those fatal signs which were called the death-tokens in the plague"—*Dr Bucknill.* Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, II. 3. 187, 188, "the death-tokens...cry 'No recovery.'" *embossed*, protuberant; see G. *carbuncle;* a plague-sore (i.e. not in the modern medical sense); and "plague" meant bubonic plague (conveyed by rats), of which there were bad outbreaks in London in 1582, 1606. See *Shakespeare's England* (1916), I. 435, 436.

223. *the thunder-bearer;* cf. the Latin epithets of Jove, *Tonitrualis* and *Tonans*.

242—245. *control*, rebuke. *notice*, recognition.

246. *And in good time you gave it.* A bitter comment on Lear's "'Tis not in thee...to bandy hasty words," 169—171.

Cruel, taunting thoughts flash instantly through Regan's restless brain and find instinctive expression. Goneril has not this malignant pettiness of her sister.

252. *Those...creatures*, creatures like her. I think that he refers to Regan, and repents of his ill-judged confidence in her. She was well-pleasing in his eyes as long as (when) he thought Goneril worse (for not

to be worst is a kind of merit), and he had trusted her; but now—he turns abruptly to Goneril to show that his trust in Regan is over. The original editions have no stop at all after "well-favoured," where according to modern punctuation a comma is desirable. Some editors, however, place a full-stop at the end of 252 (and only a comma after "wicked" in 253), and regard 252 as "expressive of the speaker's astonishment that the judgment of heaven is not fallen upon his daughters for their wickedness; that they are still 'well-favour'd,' and their beauty not blasted, as he had particularly imprecated upon one of them [Goneril] a few pages before. The line should be spoken with bitterness, a contracted brow, and surveying them from head to foot, and a great pause made between that and the next line"—*Capell.* The change of punctuation is considerable. *well-favour'd;* see *favour* in G.

259. *What need one?* Regan never fails to catch an ill suggestion and carry it a point further.

260. "Observe that the tranquillity which follows the first stunning of the blow permits Lear to reason"—*Coleridge.*

261. *Are in the poorest thing superfluous,* have some very poor thing which they strictly do not need.

267. *that patience, patience I need!* Instead of completing the sentence as a relative clause ("*that* patience *which* I need") he suddenly passes into a direct statement. The change of construction indicates a *sudden* intense consciousness of what is his true need. A change such as "that patience *that* I need," or "give me patience—that I need," seems to me not only unnecessary but positively bad.

268. The number of simple monosyllabic words is designed, I suppose, to create an effect of absolute simplicity, the simplicity of those moments in life when speech is almost impossible.

270. *stirs;* so the original editions. It should, I think, be retained, whether we regard it as a case of the 'Northern plural,' or (perhaps more probable) a construction according to the sense; see I. 1. 185, 186, note.

281. *flaws,* particles; properly *flaw* = a crack, hence a piece cracked off—a shiver. Cf. "his flaw'd heart," v. 3. 197.

282. *Or ere;* see G.

285. *bestow'd,* lodged here; cf. IV. 6. 265.

286. *hath; he* is readily supplied from *his;* cf. III. 1. 5.

288. *For his particular,* as for himself; cf. *Troilus and Cressida,* II. 2. 9, "As far as toucheth my particular" = as far as concerns myself.

I'll receive him gladly; said for her own comfort; a weaker nature,

she cannot act with Goneril's stony indifference. Cf. her miserable moralising below, 298—300.

297. *ruffle;* the Quartos *russel* (i.e. rustle); an instance probably of the confusion arising from the old-fashioned *f*. *Ruffle* = 'to be boisterous' was common in the figurative, not in the literal sense.

300. *Shut up your doors.* And Lear had thought that it was not in her "to oppose the bolt" (172) against him.

303. *To have his ear abused,* to be misled by evil advisers.

King Lear has much in common with *Timon of Athens* (1607). "Famous passages in both plays are curses. The misanthropy of Timon pours itself out in a torrent of maledictions on the whole race of man; and these at once recall, alike by their form and their substance, the most powerful speeches uttered by Lear in his madness"—*Bradley*.

ACT III.

Scene 1.

This Scene lowers the pitch of the passion after the tension of the last Act, gives relief to the feelings, and prepares us for the wilder mood, verging more on madness, in which Lear is next brought before us. Also, it leads naturally to the arrangement (essential to the plot) by which Kent communicates with Cordelia.

The storm is at once a fit setting for the action and a symbol of it. The convulsion in the physical world corresponds (1) with the convulsion in the moral world which has overthrown all the natural relations of family, and (2) with the tempest in Lear's own heart (a thought specially indicated in lines 10, 11). We may compare *Julius Cæsar*, I. 3, where the "tempest dropping fire" (10) seems to the heated imaginations of the conspirators to typify the work they have in hand—the heavens and their schemes being alike "Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible" (130). Compare again the storm at the outset of *Macbeth*. This adjustment of natural surroundings and phenomena to the action, whether for effects of sympathy or contrast, is peculiar to modern "romantic" literature.

4. *elements;* the Quartos have *element* = the air alone.

6. *main*, mainland; a rare use. Some editors interpret so "the main of Poland" in *Hamlet*, IV. 4. 15. Icelandic *megin*, mighty; from the same ultimate root as Gk. μέγας, Lat. *magnus*.

10. *his little world of man;* probably referring to the notion that man is a microcosm (Gk. *μικρός* + *κόσμος*, 'little world') or epitome of the macrocosm, i.e. universe (Gk. *μακρός*, 'great'). Cf. *Coriolanus*, II. 1. 68, "if you see this in the map of my microcosm."

12. *cub-drawn*, i.e. drawn dry by its young ones; implying 'hungry,' like "belly-pinched" in the next line. Steevens aptly quotes *As You Like It*, IV. 3. 127, "the suck'd and hungry lioness."

14. *unbonneted*, bare-headed. *Bonnet* was used of any cap, head-covering; cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, I. 2. 79—81, "I think *he* bought *his* round hose in France, *his* bonnet in Germany."

15. *take all;* explained as an exclamation of desperation which originated among gamblers, the loser bidding his rival 'take all' he had to stake. Cf. a gambling-scene in Heywood's play, *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, I. 1:

> "Fresh dice! This jewel I will venture more;
> Take this and all! I'll play in spite of luck."

"Take-all" is said to have been the name of a game at dice.

16. *None but the fool.* It is surely of the very fitness of things that Lear should have with him at such a time none but the faithful Fool, who might well say, "the fool will stay," II. 4. 77.

18. *upon the warrant of my note*, on the strength of my knowledge.

19. *a dear thing*, an important secret.

20. *cover'd;* but it was known to the courtier Curan (II. 1. 10, 11).

22. *their great stars;* see I. 2. 111—122, note.

23. *who seem no less*, who appear at any rate to be servants.

24. *speculations*, observers, watchers; abstract for concrete.

25. *Intelligent of*, giving intelligence, information about.

25—30. *what hath been seen.* 'Whatever it is that hath been seen by these spies (and reported to France), whether it be something connected with the dissensions and intrigues of the dukes, or their harsh treatment of the king, or something still more serious and secret—I say, whatever the cause, it is the fact that from France there has come' etc.

26. *snuffs;* see G. *packings*, plottings; the notion is to combine for some evil purpose, as in 'conspire.' So *packed* = confederate in a plot; cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, V. 1. 308, 309, "pack'd in all this wrong, hired to it."

27. A metaphor from riding; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 35, 36:

> "You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
> Over your friend that loves you."

29. *furnishings*, outward signs; "the trimmings or appendages, not the thing itself"—*Hudson.*

30—34. Of course, this information is derived from Cordelia's letter to Kent (II. 2. 158—163), which evidently bade him meet her at Dover (36); cf. his reference to her later, 46—49.

Lines 30—42 (*to you*) are omitted in the Folio, perhaps because of the reference to the landing of the French army—an aspect of *King Lear* that may not have proved agreeable to an Elizabethan audience.

30. *power*, army; so the plural often = forces.

31. *scatter'd*, divided, i.e. by the "division" between the dukes.

32. *have secret feet*, have secretly landed; not exactly 'got a footing,' as one might be inclined to take it. Cf. III. 3. 11, 12, "there is part of a *power* already *footed*," where the Quartos have *landed*.

33. *at point;* as we say, 'on the point of,' i.e. just about to.

35. *my credit*, the faith of what I say; not 'reputation,' since Kent, being disguised, is unknown to the other.

43. *I will talk further with you*, i.e. he will not close with the proposal at once, being ignorant who the disguised Kent is.

48. *fellow*, companion.

50. *go seek;* F. *aller chercher;* then a common use of "go"; cf. "go see" (*aller voir*), *Julius Cæsar*, I. 2. 25.

52. *but, to effect, more*, but more to the immediate purpose.

53, 54. i.e. in which matter, viz. seeking Lear, do you direct your efforts that way, while I go this.

Scene 2.

1. *Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks.* Mason compared the common representation of the winds in old books and maps as figures with puffed-out cheeks. For this figurative use of 'cheek' cf. *Coriolanus*, V. 3. 151, "To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' the air."

2, 3. *cataracts...hurricanoes;* see G. *cocks*, weather-cocks.

4—9. Cf. the storm in *The Tempest*, I. 2. 201—206.

4. *thought-executing*, acting as swift as thought; less probably "executing the thought of Him who casts you"—*Moberly.*

5. *Vaunt-couriers*, forerunners; F. *avant-coureur;* cf. the similar abbreviation of *avant* in *van* and *vanguard.*

oak-cleaving; cf. *Coriolanus*, V. 3. 152, 153, "a bolt (i.e. thunder-bolt) that should but rive an oak."

8, 9. Editors compare *The Winter's Tale*, IV. 4. 489:

"Let nature crush the sides o' the earth together
And mar the seeds within!"

and *Macbeth*, IV. 1. 59. See also 2 *Hen. IV.* I. 1. 153, 154.

8. *nature's moulds*, i.e. the shapes in which all the products of nature are cast and assume their forms. *all germens spill*, destroy all the seeds (Lat. *germina*) of life. *spill;* see G.

10. *court holy-water;* a proverbial phrase for 'fair words,' 'flattering speech'; from O. F. *eau beniste* (modern F. *bénite*) *de cour*, compliments, empty promises. Cf. Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays* (1603), Chapter XL., "How many good and well-born men are daily seene...to follow and seeke after court holy-water, and wavering favours of Princes and of fortune." From whom the 'fair words' are to come the Fool makes plainer by his next remark.

12. *here's a night pities;* for omission of the relative see p. 253.

16. *tax*, charge. For the general sentiment Moberly compares *As You Like It*, II. 7. 174—190, "Blow, blow, thou winter wind" etc.

18. *subscription*, obedience; from *subscribe*=to submit, yield; cf. I. 2. 19.

21—24. Here again the storm is brought into close relation with the action by a fine touch of that "pathetic fallacy" which ascribes to Nature an interest, friendly or adverse, in Man and his affairs. This also is a modern conception, unknown to the classics.

27. *The man that makes his toe* etc. The Fool's apparent nonsense generally has some sense and Furness seems most successful in divining it here: "A man who prefers or cherishes a mean member in place of a vital one shall suffer enduring pain where others would suffer merely a twinge. Lear had preferred Regan and Goneril to Cordelia."

31. *For there was never yet* etc. "This is the Fool's way of diverting attention after he has said something a little too pointed; the idea of a very pretty woman making faces in a looking-glass raises a smile"—*Furness.*

33. *the pattern of all patience.* So in the old play the courtier Perillus, describing how Leir is ill treated by his eldest daughter, says:

"But he the myrrour of mild patience,
Puts up all wrongs and never gives reply."

39. *Gallow*, terrify; see G.

44. *The affliction*, the actual suffering caused (which probably kills the Fool). See 62, note.

45. *pother;* an old form of *bother;* apparently intended by the 1st

Quarto which has *powther*. The Folio prints another obsolete form *pudder;* cf. the parallel forms *murder* and *murther* (often in old editions).

49. *simular man*, i.e. counterfeit, false; the Folio omits *man*, making *simular* a noun=simulator.

50. *caitiff;* see G.

52. *practised on*, plotted against; cf. the noun, I. 2. 169, II. 1. 73.

53, 54. i.e. burst the covers that contain (Lat. *continere*) and conceal you, and ask pardon of these summoners to justice. Cf. *continents* used of river-banks, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, II. 1. 92.

"*Summoners* are the officers that summon offenders before a proper tribunal"—*Steevens*.

55. *More sinn'd against than sinning;* therefore "these summoners" have no terrors for him. Yet afterwards the storm does bring home to Lear a consciousness of fault (III. 4. 32, 33). Tyrwhitt seems to have been the first to cite the Sophoclean parallel (*Œdipus Coloneus*, 266, 267):

τά γ' ἔργα μου
πεπονθότ' ἐστὶ μᾶλλον ἢ δεδρακότα—

'my deeds are rather deeds of suffering than doing.' Schlegel says of *King Lear*, "The principal characters here are not those who act, but those who suffer."

60. *demanding after*, asking for. After losing him, Kent had evidently gone back to see whether Lear had returned to Gloucester's house.

62. *My wits begin to turn.* "Insanity arising from mental and moral causes often continues in a certain state of imperfect development,...a state of exaggerated and perverted emotion, accompanied by violent and irregular conduct, but unconnected with intellectual aberration; until some physical shock is incurred,—bodily illness, or accident, or exposure to physical suffering; and then the imperfect type of mental disease is converted into perfect lunacy. We cannot doubt... that Shakespeare contemplated this exposure and physical suffering as the cause of the first crisis in [Lear's] malady"—*Dr Bucknill* (quoted by Furness). From this point then Lear enters on the stage in which mental disease begins to develop into insanity, and the *second* crisis, which makes him totally insane for a time, is contact with the assumed madness of Edgar (III. 4).

69—72. Apparently a stanza (slightly changed to "fit" Lear's present "fortunes") of an old ballad sung by the Clown at the end of *Twelfth Night*, where the first stanza runs:

"When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day."

Lines 2 and 4 are the 'burden' or refrain repeated in each stanza.

The constant mention or introduction of ballads old and new is a marked feature of the Elizabethan drama. A great quantity of these ballads has survived in popular song-books and collections of airs. They support other evidence which shows that in Shakespeare's time the English were a very musical race, and that a knowledge of music was widespread. Some think that Puritanism had much to do with the decline of music in England as a national taste and recreation. One section of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* is "Ballads that illustrate Shakespeare." The standard authority on them is Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (1894 ed.).

69. *and a little;* this seemingly redundant *and* is common in ballads; perhaps it implies 'even.'

70. *Hey* and *ho* occur frequently in ballad-refrains. Cf. *As You Like It*, v. 3. 18, "With a *hey*, and a *ho*, and a *hey* nonino."

74—88. These lines are wanting in the Quartos; probably they were introduced by the actor who played the part of the Fool, and, though spurious, came into the Folio from the stage-copy of *Lear*. The couplets are an imitation of some old verses called *Merlin's Prophecy*, which used to be attributed to Chaucer.

Professor Skeat found also in a Bodleian MS. another version of the *Prophecy*, introduced with the heading *Prophecia Merlini doctoris perfecti.* Pope refers to it as "Merlin's prophecy" (*Satires*, "To Augustus," 132). Cf. line 88.

78. *are their tailors' tutors;* "invent fashions for them." The first couplet (76, 77) was ironical, the others paint an ideal state.

88. *Merlin;* the famous wizard and prophet of ancient Britain, who appears in the Arthurian legends; cf. Tennyson's *Merlin and Vivien* and *Merlin and the Gleam*. *The Birth of Merlin* is one of the pseudo-Shakespearian plays (and in it are an Earl of Cornwall, an Earl of Gloucester, and a courtier Oswald).

before his time. "As, according to the old legend, King Lear was contemporary with Joash, King of Judah"—*Moberly*. See the extract from Holinshed in the *Appendix*, p. 236. But it is perhaps only a jest, of a piece with the rest of the foolish stuff.

Scene 3.

From this point the threads of plot (the Lear story) and underplot (the Gloucester story) are tightly interwoven; since Gloucester's intervention on Lear's behalf, and the suspicion that he is acting with "France," lead to a closening of the relations between Edmund, Cornwall and Regan, and ultimately to what befalls Gloucester himself through them.

1. *I like not this...dealing.* He had protested (II. 4. 296—298).

10. *closet;* perhaps='cabinet, safe.'

12. *already footed;* cf. III. 1. 32.

14. *charity;* cf. III. 4. 58, "Do poor Tom some charity," i.e. kindness.

15. *I am ill.* Cf. *Twelfth Night*, I. 5. 116, 117, "Go you, Malvolio; if it be a suit from the count, I am sick, or not at home; what you will, to dismiss it" (i.e. *say* that I am).

16, 17. *my old master must be relieved.* Gloucester's motives are a curious mixture: pity of the king and fear that he will come in to his own again and have his revenge, or at any rate be avenged by Cordelia.

19. *forbid*, forbidden; cf. Gloucester's first speech.

21. *a fair deserving*, i.e. a good turn which should win the gratitude of Cornwall and Regan. Cf. Scene 5 of this Act.

Scene 4.

Perhaps the great feature of this Scene is the contrast (to quote Coleridge) between "the real madness of Lear, the feigned madness of Edgar, [and] the babbling of the Fool." Edgar's madness is mostly idiocy or nonsense, with little of that element of reason and coherence which makes mental derangement like Lear's so ghastly. Edgar's affliction, if real, would inspire pity; Lear's, terror and pity. The fact that the two characters are brought together thus strengthens greatly the connection between the main plot and the minor.

6, 7. *Thou...thee;* each designedly emphasised by position.

8, 9. *But where* etc. "Lear enunciates a truth often observed in compound diseases"—*Dr Bucknill.*

12—14. This is a physical fact of which many illustrations could be given, e.g. from the annals of religious fanaticism.

25. *things would;* an omission of the relative, where the sense is not obscured thereby.

But I'll go in. For the Fool's sake; cf. his next words.

26. *poverty;* the number of examples in *Lear* of the abstract put for the concrete (here 'poor people') is noticeable. The figure of speech is often intensive: e.g. to be 'poverty' itself, personified, sounds worse than to be 'poor.' Cf. "pomp," 33.

31. *loop'd and window'd,* full of holes and openings. Shakespeare uses *loop = loophole* in 1 *Henry IV.* IV. 1. 71, "stop all sightholes, every loop"; referring to the apertures frequent in the walls of old castles.

32, 33. *O, I have ta'en Too little care;* see III. 2. 55, note.

35. *the superflux,* the surplus of your wealth and comfort. The same thought occurs in IV. 1. 69—73, and was probably the germ of a famous passage in Milton's *Comus*, 767—774 (which is so incongruous in the mouth of the speaker that it is obviously to be regarded as an expression of the poet's own views).

37. *Fathom and half;* he speaks as though he were a sailor taking soundings—*Steevens.*

46. *Through the sharp hawthorn;* cf. 93. No doubt, this and the next line, which occurs in the *Induction*, I. 10, to *The Taming of the Shrew*, come from some old ballad.

52, 53. *laid knives* etc.; i.e. to tempt him to commit suicide. Theobald pointed out that Shakespeare here alludes to a passage in Harsnet's *Popish Impostures;* which describes how "a new halter and two blades of knives" were left in the "gallery" of the house of certain persons said to be possessed by evil spirits, and how one of the persons said "that the devil layd them in the Gallery, that some of those who were possessed might either hang themselves with the halter, or kil themselves with the blades." This belief that the devil furnishes means of self-destruction occurs often. Marlowe makes Mephistophilis give Faustus a dagger to kill himself, *Dr Faustus*, XIII. 52.

This (lines 52, 53) is one of the many Shakespearian allusions in *Kenilworth* (chapter III. end) which add so much to the Elizabethan colouring of the novel and illustrate Scott's wonderful knowledge of Shakespeare.

56. *five wits;* then a proverbial term by which "common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, memory" were indicated. The "five wits" corresponded to (sometimes were identified with) the "five senses."

57 *do de, do de;* meant to suggest his shivers, teeth chattering.

57, 58. *star-blasting;* referring to the evil "influence" with which the stars were supposed to "strike"; see I. 2. 111—122, 116, notes.

taking, witchery; cf. II. 4. 159. Less probably 'infection.'

60. *there...and there;* he catches at the supposed fiend.

64, 65. The alliteration lends a terrible intensity to the imprecation; cf. I. 4. 280. *pendulous*, overhanging, impending; the epithet is 'transferred' from "plagues" to "air."

69. *unkind;* probably in the two senses 'unnatural' and 'hard-hearted'; cf. I. 1. 255.

71. *thus little mercy;* pointing to Edgar's almost "uncovered" body, 97. Some, however, explain it in reference to II. 3. 15, 16.

73. *pelican;* alluding to the belief that the pelican feeds its young with blood from its own breast; cf. *Hamlet*, IV. 5. 144—146:

> "To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms,
> And, like the kind life-rendering pelican,
> Repast them with my blood."

In the old play Leir says of himself (p. 322),

> "I am as kind as is the Pellican,
> That kils it selfe, to saue her young ones liues."

Young pelicans symbolise rapacious children (*Rich. II.* II. 1. 126, 127).

74. *Pillicock;* echoing *pelican*. There was a rhyme

> "Pillycock, Pillycock sat on a hill;
> If he's not gone, he sits there still."

Pillicock; a term of endearment = a darling, favourite.

82. *A serving-man.* This description, coupled with the general characterisation of Oswald, affords a satirical but no doubt correct picture of the Elizabethan servant who aped the manners of his master and played 'the fine gentleman' lower down in the social scale. Shakespeare may have had in mind some Oswald in the service of one of his noble patrons, e.g. the Earl of Southampton.

83. *curled my hair*, i.e. like a foppish gallant; cf. *Othello*, I. 2. 68, "The wealthy curled darlings of our nation." Here and again in 88, 89 there seem to be allusions to Harsnet's book; cf. "Then Master Mainy, by the instigation of the first of the seven [spirits],...*curled his hair*, and used such gestures as Master Edmund presently affirmed that that spirit was *Pride*." This spirit, with others, was exorcised from the man possessed, and they departed thus: "the spirit of *pride* in the form of a peacock; the spirit of *sloth* in the likeness of an ass; the spirit of envie in the similitude of a *dog;* the spirit of *gluttony* in the forme of a *wolfe*" (quoted by Malone).

wore gloves in my cap, i.e. as the 'favours' of his mistress. Cf. Scott's picture of "many a knight" (*The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, IV. 19):

> "With favour in his crest [helmet], or glove,
> Memorial of his ladye-love."

87, 88. *light of ear;* "credulous of ear, ready to receive malicious reports"—*Johnson*. Or (?) 'an eavesdropper.'

88. *hog in sloth* etc. In a note on *Piers the Plowman* (Early English Text Society's ed., p. 102) Professor Skeat says: "Few subjects are more common in our old authors than this one, of the Seven Deadly Sins... In the Ancren Riwle each of these sins is represented by some animal; so that we have (1) the Lion of Pride; (2) the Nedder (or Adder) of Envy; (3) the Unicorn of Wrath; (4) the Scorpion of Lechery; (5) the Fox of Avarice; (6) the Sow of Gluttony; and (7) the Bear of Sloth." He notes that the Sins are symbolised by animals in *The Faerie Queene*, I. 4. 17—35.

94, 95. *suum;* perhaps a "sound imitative of the whistling of the wind"—*Schmidt*. *nonny;* short for *nonino;* both occur in the refrains of ballads. *Dolphin my boy;* probably a scrap from some song. *Dolphin* = Dauphin; see G.

sessa; perhaps an interjection like *so so*, implying 'let be'; or from F. *cesser* = stop (as Johnson explained it). See again III. 6. 73.

Line 95 alludes, no doubt, to some well-known song or tale. Steevens had been told by an "old gentleman" of a ballad which described how a king of France was anxious that his son, the Dauphin, should distinguish himself in battle; so he would not let the boy attack any formidable-looking antagonist, but said, as each champion rode across the field, "Dolphin my boy, let him trot by"—till there were no champions left. One would like better evidence for this story.

100. *no perfume;* referring to civet; cf. IV. 6. 114.

101. *unaccommodated*, i.e. unprovided with the conveniences of civilized life, such as clothes.

One of the two main causes which produce madness out of mental disease Lear has already experienced (see III. 2. 62, note); the other is contact with madness, which results in imitation, and here we see its effects on Lear. His mind now is totally unhinged. To "tear off" the clothes is a common feature of insanity. 104. *naughty*, bad; see G.

107. *a walking fire*, i.e. Gloucester, "with a torch." There was a class of spirits, often called *ambulones* (Lat. *ambulare*, to walk), who misled travellers by means of a 'false fire,' *ignis fatuus;* what the

Germans call an *elf-licht*. Such were Jack-o'-Lanthorn and Will-o'-the-Wisp. Hence Edgar's explanation "This is the foul fiend."

108. *Flibbertigibbet*. This name, like those of the fiends mentioned in 131, 134, IV. 1. 61, 62, comes in Harsnet; unlike them, it has survived, having somehow got the notion 'gossiping woman.'

109. *curfew;* the regular signal for ghosts and evil spirits to "walk" (the technical word) abroad; cf. *The Tempest*, v. 38—40, and *Comus*, 434, 435:

"unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magic chains at curfew time."

till the first cock. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. 1. 157, "It [the ghost] faded on the crowing of the cock"; see the whole passage, 149—161, with its reference to the old belief that at Christmas-time the cock crows all night, "And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad."

109, 110. *the web and the pin*, cataract of the eye; cf. *The Winter's Tale*, I. 2. 291, "eyes blind with the pin and web."

hare-lip, a kind of cleft or fissure in the upper lip. For the belief that malicious fairies and spirits cause blemishes in children at their birth see *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, v. 1. 416—421.

111. *creature;* collective = creatures.

112—116. The stanza means that Saint Vitalis traversed the wold three times, met the Nightmare and her nine familiar spirits, bade her dismount from those spirits on which she was riding and pledge her word not to harm anyone, and then dismissed her. These lines, 112—116, are a popular charm or incantation against nightmare; they are found, with slight variations, elsewhere. Bedlamites, gipsies and other vagabonds used to sell charms of this kind, against various diseases, to the people. (From Warburton's note.) Disraeli in his *Curiosities of Literature* quotes an old "Tom-a-Bedlam Song," and the first stanza is a sort of general incantation.

112. *Saint Withold* = Saint Vitalis, the traditional protector from nightmare. The Quartos have *Swithald*, the Folio *Swithold*, which some editors retain, while others print *Saint Withold* or *S. Withold*.

old = *wold*, a down; see G.

113. *night-mare;* A.S. *niht*, night + *mara*, literally 'a crusher,' hence 'a crushing weight.'

116. *aroint*, avaunt; see G.

122. *wall-newt*, lizard. *newt;* see G. *water*, i.e. water-newt.

124. *sallets*, salads; see G.

125. *mantle*, the scum that forms on the surface of standing water;

cf. *The Tempest*, IV. 182, "the filthy-mantled pool," i.e. covered with a filthy scum.

126. *tithing*, a subdivision of a county answering to a ward in a city. We should say 'from parish to parish.'

127. *who hath had*, i.e. in his better days, as "a serving-man" (82) like Oswald. *three suits;* see note on *three-suited*, II. 2. 14.

128. *weapon to wear*. Cf. Kent's disgust that Oswald "should wear a sword" (II. 2. 65).

129, 130. *deer*, game or animals, each being an old use of *deer* (cognate with Germ. *thier*, an animal). Editors quote the old romance *Sir Bevis of Hamptoun:*

"Rattes and myce and suche smal dere
Was his meate that seuen yere."

131. *Beware*, i.e. of *Smulkin;* the name is from Harsnet, like *Modo* and *Mahu* (a corruption of *Mahound*, i.e. *Mahomet*); see p. 244.

133. *a gentleman*. He pretends to resent "no *better* company."

135, 136. *grown so vile*. Gloucester is of course thinking of Edgar's supposed treachery as well as of Lear's daughters. *gets*, begets.

143. *is;* singular, in agreement with the single idea of 'provision' contained in *fire and food*.

145. *What is the cause of thunder?* A stock subject of discussion, so that perhaps the question was a sort of joke. Cf. Chaucer, *Squire's Tale*, 250, "As sore wondred som of cause of thonder."

146. *the house*, the farm-house "adjoining Gloucester's castle" (Scene 6), where he has made the provision for Lear.

149. *prevent;* with the old sense 'to forestall, be too quick for.'

154. *He said it would be thus*. Kent had hinted his disbelief in the professions made by Goneril and Regan (I. 1. 179, 180).

157. *he sought my life*. Edgar thus learns from Gloucester's own lips the cause of his treatment of him—that it has been due to some deception or error. The knowledge disarms him of resentment, and marks the first step towards the change in their relations (IV. 1).

160. *crazed;* see G.

161. *cry you mercy*, excuse me; literally '*I* cry *to* you for mercy.' Cf. III. 6. 51 and III. 2. 53, 54 ("cry...grace").

162. *your company*. He turns from Gloucester to Edgar, "this philosopher" (144). *your;* emphatic.

165. *This way;* to the farm-house (146), not "into the hovel."

With him; Lear will only go if Edgar goes too—an arrangement to which Kent begs Gloucester to consent (167). Hence it is through

Lear that Edgar is brought near to Gloucester's castle and is thus at hand when Gloucester needs his help (III. 7. 102—104). Thus the incident is a link in the connection between the plot and underplot.

167. *soothe*, humour.

172—174. *Child Rowland.* "The ballad quoted here has never been discovered. Fragments of a Scottish version of the story are given by Jamieson in his *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities*, and in Prof. Child's *English and Scottish Ballads*, i. 245 fol."—*Rolfe.*

The first of these lines (172) furnished Browning with the title of a well known poem. *Child* = Knight; a common meaning in old ballads. See G.

His word, watch-word, i.e. the giant's (inside the "dark tower").

a British man. For the bearing of *British* on the date of *King Lear* see *Introduction.*

Scene 5.

"The intervention of the fifth scene is particularly judicious,—the interruption allowing an interval for Lear to appear in full madness in the sixth scene"—*Coleridge.*

1, 2. *his house.* The fact that it *is* Gloucester's house and that he will be "having his revenge" on his host does not trouble, or even occur to, Cornwall. Cf. Gloucester's own protests, III. 7. 30, 39.

4. *nature*, i.e. his natural instinct, which would lead him to shield his father, is (he pretends) overcome by his sense of loyal duty to Cornwall; cf. his last speech in the Scene.

8, 9. *provoking merit* etc. The meaning seems to be that a feeling of his own worthiness and of Gloucester's unworthiness was the motive that instigated Edgar to seek his father's life (cf. II. 1. 91). I think that "himself" must refer, not to Edgar (as it should strictly), but to Gloucester, who is the "he" uppermost in Cornwall's thoughts.

11. *repent to be just*, be sorry for doing what is right.

the letter. Gloucester had told Edmund where he kept it (III. 3).

12. *approves;* cf. II. 2. 153. *intelligent*, knowing, cognisant of the plot; or perhaps 'giving information,' as in III. 1. 25.

party to, sympathiser with, supporter.

21. *comforting*, aiding; see G.

22. *persever;* the common Elizabethan form, scanned *perséver* in verse.

24. *blood* = "nature" in 4.

Scene 6.

4. *have;* plural because 'attracted' to the nearer word "wits"; cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. 5. 153, "every one of these *letters are* in my name."

6. *Frateretto;* one of the fiends mentioned by Harsnet.

6, 7. *Nero is an angler.* Editors note that Rabelais, II. xxx. makes Nero a fiddler in Hell and Trajan an angler; hence a (not necessary) proposal to substitute "Trajan" for "Nero" here.

Rabelais' *History of Gargantua* was published in an English translation as early as 1575 and was doubtless known to Shakespeare. The Clown's jesting in *Twelfth Night*, II. 3. 23—25, has been considered by several critics an imitation of Rabelais. "Gargantua" (Rabelais' giant) is referred to in *As You Like It*, III. 2. 238.

It is hardly necessary to note that the reference to Nero is an anachronism.

7. *Pray, innocent.* Spoken to the Fool. For *innocent* = fool, idiot, cf. *All's Well That Ends Well*, IV. 3. 213, "the shrieve's fool... a dumb innocent." It is a euphemistic word like 'natural' in the sense 'an idiot' (cf. *The Tempest*, III. 2. 37) and 'simple' = weak in intellect. Such terms show the universal feeling of kindly pity towards mental affliction.

10. *yeoman*, a freeholder, somewhat below the rank of a man of 'gentle' birth; see G.

12. *to his son*, i.e. as, for; from the notion 'equivalent to.' Cf. 'to take *to* wife.' So in "We have Abraham *to* our father," *Luke* iii. 8.

13. *he's a mad yeoman* etc. "A rather curious commentary on some of the Poet's own doings; who obtained from the Heralds' College a coat-of-arms in his father's name; thus getting his yeoman father dubbed a gentleman, in order, no doubt, that he himself might inherit his rank"—*Hudson*. This was not long before the composition of *Lear*.

15, 16. *To have a thousand.* The Fool's picture of a son taking precedence of his father (cf. "before him") suggests to Lear his own case, as the Fool intended, and instantly the thought of revenge on his daughters ("'em") flashes into words. It is ever-present in his brain and stirred to consciousness by a mere hint.

17—55. From *The foul fiend* down to *let her scape* (55) is omitted in the Folio. I suppose that it was omitted in the acting-version of the play, the mock trial being one of those daring pieces of

imaginativeness which on the stage become perilously akin to the grotesque, or even comic. "The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted," said Charles Lamb, and this seems to be one of the scenes that give colour to his remark. At any rate, the part of Lear here requires supreme capacity in the actor if the tragic effect is to be maintained.

19. *health.* Some would substitute *heels*, because there was a proverb "Trust not a horse's heels nor a dog's tooth." Compare, however, Johnson's explanation: "Shakespeare is here speaking not of things maliciously treacherous, but of things uncertain and not durable. A horse is above all other animals subject to diseases."

20—22. *arraign;* see G. *justicer;* an old, abbreviated, form of *justiciar* = 'a judge'; cf. 'justice,' e.g. 'a Justice of the Peace.' See IV. 2. 79. *she foxes.* In folklore the *fox* was the type of ingratitude (cf. III. 7. 27) as well as cunning; cf. *Coriolanus*, IV. 2. 18.

23. *where he stands*, i.e. "the foul fiend."

23, 24. *Wantest thou eyes at trial?* "Do you want to attract admiration, even while you stand at the bar of justice?"—*Steevens.* The question is supposed to be addressed to one of the "she foxes" (22).

25. *Come o'er the bourn.* The allusion, says Chappell, "is to an English ballad by William Birch, entitled 'A Songe betwene the Quenes Majestie and Englande,' a copy of which is in the library of the Society of Antiquaries. England commences the dialogue, inviting Queen Elizabeth in the following words:

'Come over the born, Bessy, come over the born, Bessy,
Swete Bessy, come over to me.'"

Originally an old love-song; popular ballads were often moralised for religious or political purposes in new versions. Another version of this song was a dialogue between Christ and England. See *Shakespeare's England* (1916), II. 518.

bourn, brook; see G. The Quartos have *broome.*

30. *Hopdance.* Harsnet mentions *Hoberdidance*, one of "the four devils" of the morrice-dance. See again IV. 1. 62. Lines 29, 30, and 31, 32 allude to Harsnet.

31. *white herring;* "fresh (opposed to *red*) herrings"—*Dyce;* but some say that pickled herrings were called "white" in the north.

35. *their evidence*, the witnesses against them: abstract for concrete.

These lines show Shakespeare's familiarity with legal procedure. His frequent and accurate use of legal terms has been adduced as evidence in favour of an old but vague tradition that as a youth he

served in an attorney's office. But the present play shows that his medical knowledge was equal to his legal, and his use of technical terms in general is remarkably correct.

41—44. Another ballad-snatch. "Sleepest or wakest thou?" seems to have been a proverbial turn of phrase.

one blast, i.e. on his shepherd's pipe. It shall save him from the punishment he deserves for letting his sheep stray into the corn. *minikin*, pretty little, dainty; see G.

45. *Pur.* "This may be only an imitation of the noise made by a cat. *Purre* is, however, one of the devils mentioned in Harsnet's book"—*Malone*.

the cat is gray. In a note on *Romeo and Juliet*, I. 4. 40, "dun's the mouse," Moberly suggests that there was a proverb, "If dun's the mouse, the cat is gray"—implying 'the mouse ought to remember that the cat is just as hard to see in the dark as the mouse herself.'

51. *Cry you mercy, I took you* etc. A proverbial and vulgar saying.

53. *store*, material; *stuff* and *stone* are plausible corrections.

Stop her there! meaning Goneril? Lear, I think, fancies that she has escaped while their attention has been directed to Regan, whom he seems later (75—77) to consider still present. He is always more concerned with Goneril, knowing her to be the greater, more daring wrong-doer (and so more likely to attempt to escape).

57. *the patience;* cf. Lear's words II. 4. 226, III. 2. 33.

61, 62. How pathetic a touch is it that Lear thinks that even his old favourites have caught the infection of treachery and turned upon him!

68. *brach;* cf. I. 4. 109. *lym*, a *lime*-hound or *limer;* so called from the leash (Middle E. *liam*) with which it was held in, like a greyhound in the slip. The *lime*-hound (F. *limier*) was a sort of blood-hound used for a special purpose in stag-hunting, viz. to "harbour" the stag, i.e. find him in the wood and make him break covert (when the pack is turned on). Many old sporting-terms are of French origin.

69. *bobtail tike*, cur with its tail cut short. "Tike" is commonest now in the sense 'fellow' (cf. 'Yorkshire tikes'), said generally in an uncomplimentary sense.

trundle-tail, curly-tailed mongrel; also called *trindle-tail.* Cf. Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, I. 3. 29, "Ay, and your dogs are trindle-tails and curs."

72. *hatch*, a half-door; like a 'buttery-hatch.'

73. *Sessa!* Cf. III. 4. 95. If corrupted from F. *cessez* ('stop—

enough of that'), it may have been used to introduce a fresh subject, as here.

74. *thy horn is dry*, i.e. empty: hence his desire to be off "to wakes and fairs"; perhaps too the words are a hint to the charitable feelings of the company. An old description of these 'Bedlamites' tells us that they carried a horn with a stopper, which served the double purpose of announcing their arrival at a farm or village, and of holding any scraps of meat or drinkables that they might "enforce" (II. 3. 19, 20) from the inhabitants.

75. *anatomize*, dissect.

78. *entertain*, take into my service; see G.

79, 80. *Persian attire;* most likely, not merely a general and ironical reference to the proverbial splendours of the East, but a special 'topical' allusion.

"A Persian embassy had been sent to England early in James I.'s reign, and a tombstone still remains in the churchyard of St Botolph's, Bishopsgate Street, erected to the memory of the secretary of the embassy...The joke on outlandish dress arises probably from the presence of these Persians in London"—*Moberly*.

Note the earlier allusions to the Shah of Persia in *Twelfth Night*, II. 5. 198, III. 4. 307, due probably to the interest excited by the embassy, the first sent out from England to Persia, which was despatched in 1598 under the famous traveller Sir Roger Shirley and his brother Anthony, the latter of whom returned in 1599, i.e. not long before the composition of *Twelfth Night* (1601). Again, the disguise of Biron and his friends as "Muscovites," "in Russian habits," *Love's Labour's Lost*, V. 2, was undoubtedly suggested by the diplomatic intercourse between Russia and England, more especially by the Russian embassy to London in 1582. So in 1896, when a celebrated Chinese statesman visited England, there were many jesting allusions in the newspapers to Chinese yellow jackets, peacock's feathers, etc.

85. *And I'll go to bed at noon.* These are the last words spoken by the Fool, who at line 101 passes out of the play altogether. The words seem designed to hint at his withdrawal from the action, and its cause, viz. that he has broken down under "the affliction" (III. 2. 44) and sufferings of this terrible night. His delicacy of frame is indicated (as Cowden Clarke notes) by several side-touches, e.g. his 'pining away' on Cordelia's departure from England (I. 4. 71, 72) and his sensitiveness to the storm (III. 2. 10—13) and cold (III. 4. 76, 77). Compare too the king's solicitude about him, III. 2. 63—68, III. 4.

25—27, and Kent's words, III. 4. 41, which could only be spoken to some delicate, shrinking creature. The actor might make the audience feel that the Fool was dying. In *reading* the plays we must always bear in mind that the original actors would be instructed by Shakespeare himself, and so could "make clear by looks, tones and by-play" things that may be obscure to us—*Bradley*.

89. *a plot of death*. Oswald had been sent to fetch Lear (III. 7. 13).

95. *Stand in assured loss*. "Stand" is often used thus in prepositional phrases to imply being in a certain condition (100).

97. *conduct*, guidance; cf. the common sense 'escort.'

98. *balm'd*, healed as with medicine. Cf. the description of sleep as "balm of hurt minds," *Macbeth*, II. 2. 39; and "balmy slumbers," *Othello*, II. 3. 258. Shakespeare generally uses 'balm' with the notion 'something medicinal.'

sinews; probably = nerves, as in *Venus and Adonis*, 903; less likely = strength (the sinews, i.e. tendons of the body, being regarded as the seat of strength). Some editions change to *senses*, a simpler word and more appropriate to Lear's *mental* breakdown; cf. IV. 4. 9, IV. 7. 16. But "sinews" gives a fair sense and goes better with "broken"—cf. "we break the sinews of our plot," *Twelfth Night*, II. 5. 83, 84. (From Furness's note.)

100. Cf. *Othello*, II. 1. 50, "my hopes...stand in bold cure," i.e. are plucking up spirit and recovering.

102—115. This passage is in the Quartos but not in the Folio. Its omission from the Folio, the general style, which in some places is obscure, and (at first sight) the rhyme, all tell against it. On the other hand, its being in the Quartos is a strong argument in favour of its genuineness, and some turns of expression have a Shakespearian ring, e.g. "He childed as I father'd" and "repeals." Moreover, the action seems to require that Edgar should stay behind and make some remark, instead of going out with the others as though he were to accompany Lear to Dover.

Then as regards the rhyme, we may note that there are eight rhymed lines in I. 1. 175—182 and V. 3. 320—327, and that rhyme is elsewhere made the medium of 'sententious moralising' like lines 102—107; cf. *Othello* (which probably came just before *Lear*), where we have a moralising speech of eighteen lines in rhymed couplets, I. 3. 202—219. In the latter part of Edgar's words the rhyme produces the effect of leave-taking and conclusion to the situation.

On the whole, therefore, I think that the passage must be accepted.

102. *our woes*, troubles like our own.

105. *free things;* circumstances "clear from distress"—*Johnson.* The line expands the idea of solitude in 104 (cf. "alone"—emphatic).

106. *sufferance*, suffering.

107. *When grief hath mates.* The proverbial sentiment, *solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris* (or *malorum*). Cf. the lines which Milton puts into Satan's mouth, *Paradise Regained*, I. 397—402.

bearing; commonly taken as a noun = suffering, with the construction 'when grief hath mates and bearing *hath* fellowship.' But more probably, I think, a participle, thus: 'when grief hath mates and companionship which bear its (grief's) troubles with it.'

108. *portable*, supportable; as in *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 89.

110. *childed...father'd;* thoroughly Shakespearian, and a good illustration of what is said in the note on II. 1. 70.

111. *the high noises*, i.e. the clear indications of disquiet in the state. The air, he means, is full of alarms. Some take *high* = in high places, among the great. *bewray*, reveal; see G.

111—113. 'Do not throw off your disguise till public opinion, which is now mistaken about you and does you wrong, learns by proof what you really are (or your uprightness) and recalls you to society.' *repeals;* see G.

114. *What will hap*, whatever else happens, may the king at any rate escape. *scape;* see G.

Scene 7.

1. *Post speedily;* addressed to Goneril, who is about to leave under Edmund's escort.

2. *this letter;* cf. III. 5. 11, "This is the letter he spoke of."

4. *Hang him instantly.* Regan is ever quick to suggest something evil. The whole of her bearing in this Scene is very characteristic of her essentially cruel nature.

10. *bound to the like*, ready to make similar speedy ("festinate") preparations.

11. *intelligent*, bearing information; cf. III. 1. 25.

12. *farewell, my lord of Gloucester.* The title is pronounced with significant emphasis, indicating to Edmund that Cornwall has not forgotten his promise (III. 5. 18, 19), but that treachery has reaped its hoped-for reward—"The younger rises when the old doth fall." Oswald of course (14) uses the title, as hitherto, of the father.

13. *where's the king?* The question confirms Gloucester's remark about the plot against Lear (III. 6. 89).

14. *convey'd.* He purposely uses a word that suggests secrecy and inspires suspicion. Cf. I. 2. 95, note.

16. *questrists after*, searchers for.

17. *the lords dependants*, the dependent lords. So the old editions. Some editors change to *lord's*, i.e. Gloucester's, to show that those meant are followers of the earl, not of the king, since we are only told that he had a train of "knights" (15) after his abdication.

But perhaps Oswald means nobles (other than the 100 "knights") who in the past were attached to Lear's court and have now taken up his cause.

23. *pass upon his life*, i.e. pass sentence upon; that is, a sentence of death. This phrase "pass upon" was common.

25. *do a courtesy to;* either 'obey, yield to,' from *courtesy* = a bow, obeisance; or simply 'gratify, show complaisance to.'

28. *corky*, shrivelled, like cork-bark. Percy noted that the word is used so ("an old corkie woman") in Harsnet's *Declaration.*

29. *means;* so the Quartos and Folio; see note on I. 1. 183.

30. *You are my guests;* Gloucester insists (cf. 38, 39), but vainly, on this natural claim to their consideration.

36. *Naughty*, wicked; see G.

38. *quicken*, come to life; cf. 'the *quick*' = the living.

39. *hospitable*, of your "host" (38). *favours*, features; see G.

42. *simple-answer'd*, plain in your answer; 'no quibbling.'

53. Explained by *Macbeth*, V. 7. 1, 2:

"They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But, bear-like, I must fight the course" (=baiting).

56. *Pluck out his poor old eyes.* By a stroke of terrible irony Gloucester suggests his own torture, the very one that Goneril had proposed (5).

57. *anointed*, with the holy oil of consecration, the "balm." Cf. 3 *Henry VI.* III. 1. 17, "Thy balm wash'd off wherewith thou wast anointed" ("thou" = Henry VI.) and the old play *Leir* (Hazlitt, p. 357):

"Oh, but beware, how thou dost lay thy hand
Vpon the high anoynted of the Lord."

stick; the Quartos have *rash*, "the old hunting term for the stroke made by a wild boar with its tusks"—*Steevens.*

59. *buoy'd up*, risen mountains high.

60. *stelled*, starry; a word coined from Lat. *stella*—cf. *stellatus*, starry, set with stars. This explanation (Theobald's) seems more probable than that *stelled* = fixed, from an old verb 'to *stell*' = to place, fix, which Shakespeare has in *Lucrece*, 1444.

61. *holp*, helped. "The meaning seems to be 'he encouraged the heavens to *rain* [the Quartos *rage*] more fiercely upon him'"—*Moberly*.

62. *stern*; the Quartos have *dearne*, an old word = secret, gloomy, sad, which occurs in a non-Shakespearian part of *Pericles*, Prologue (15) to Act III. ("By many a dern and painful perch").

64. The Quartos have *subscrib'd*, which many editors adopt; the Folio *subscribe*; the latter must be treated as part of what is said to the porter, the marks of quotation being placed in the middle of 64, instead of at the end of 63.

Cruels here seems to me to mean 'cruel *acts*,' though the more natural sense would be 'cruel *creatures*.'

'To *subscribe*,' as we have seen, I. 2. 19 (note), may mean 'to assent to,' whence 'to condone, forgive' is a natural extension of sense.

Taking then *cruels* = 'cruel acts' and *subscribed* = 'forgiven' we may paraphrase 63, 64 thus: 'You would have said, "porter, open the gate," all the cruelties committed by the wolves at other times being forgiven'—or with the Folio reading, "porter, open the gate, forgive the cruelties" etc. If, as some argue, *cruels* must mean 'cruel creatures,' not 'cruel acts,' it is best to read *subscribe* (Folio) and interpret, 'all things which at other times are cruel are now forgiving'—an implication that the porter who has not "turned the key" to admit the wolves is the only exception. But the balance of the sentence would make it more natural to take *subscribe* as an imperative like "turn." The explanation mentioned by Abbott (p. 319), "all other cruel animals being allowed entrance," gives a forced sense to *subscrib'd* (Quartos).

66—83. This incident of mutilation ("mutilation is always more horrible than murder") has been much criticised as being physically repulsive and therefore alien from the sublimity and moral beauty of pure tragedy. "I will not," says Coleridge, "disguise my conviction that in this one point the tragic in this play has been urged beyond the outermost mark and *ne plus ultra* of the dramatic." Still, as Tieck notes, the incident, though it takes place on the stage, need not be seen by the audience, and Shakespeare, we may suppose, did not intend it to be. It can be concealed from the spectators by the arrangement of the stage and the grouping of the characters, especially the attendants. Moreover, its barbarity is consonant with the almost savage tone of the

whole play. Again, it is some satisfaction to us that the deed is not done without a protest from one of those present (71—78), and that it brings its own nemesis instantly. Editors cite other cases of scenes of mutilation on the Elizabethan stage, and the pseudo-Shakespearian *Titus Andronicus*, II. 4, is still more repulsive. (See the materials in Furness's note.)

66. *See't;* of course, in mocking allusion to "I shall *see*" (64); cf. 71. For a similar, though less shocking, piece of jesting by Cornwall, cf. II. 4. 196. One is reminded of the cynical, heartless levity of Sebastian and Antonio in *The Tempest*, II. 1. 10 *et seq.*

It is by such side-touches that Shakespeare reveals the characters of his minor *dramatis personæ*. Cornwall is a signal illustration of his power of portraying by a few vivid strokes.

67. *these...thine.* Perhaps emphasised: Gloucester's "poor old eyes" shall not escape, though Lear's have.

75. *If you did wear*, i.e. like poor Gloucester. *you;* emphatic.

77. *villain*, serf, bondman; see G.

79. Apparently Cornwall is getting the worst of the fight (cf. 94), so Regan intervenes. *peasant;* see G.

86. *quit*, requite, revenge; see G.

87—89. This is the finishing stroke, and *she*, as we should expect, deals it. The old man's agony, mental and physical, being now complete, it only remains to thrust him out of his own castle; and she gives the order (92). *overture*, revelation.

90. A fine touch, that in an instant he recognises the truth. *abused;* treated unjustly.

92. *smell;* since there is no more "seeing" for Gloucester. She has learnt the trick of vile mocking from Cornwall.

98—106. Omitted in the Folio, probably because merely an after-comment on the situation, though true enough to life.

Cornwall's exit marks the real close of the situation, which is the point where the ordinary playwright and actor will always bring down the curtain, so as to avoid the risk of an anticlimax. In the more finished, however, of modern plays there is a tendency to revert to Shakespeare's method of quieter endings, because it is both monotonous and essentially artificial that every act should close with a striking climax.

100. *old*, natural. *Numbers* xvi. 29 has been compared.

102. *the Bedlam*, the Bedlamite, i.e. Edgar (who, we may remember, now knows that Gloucester was duped into treating him ill).

105, 106. "White of eggs was a frequent application of the old surgeons, and, in *Banister's Surgery*, the white of eggs spread upon flax is noted as a good application"—*Dr Bucknill.*

Referring back to lines 62–65, note that *King Lear* teems with references to "the lower animals and man's likeness to them"—as if we were to think that the souls of savage creatures had indeed passed into these savage, monstrous characters by metempsychosis (see *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. I. 130—138).

ACT IV.

Scene 1.

1. *known;* to yourself. Better to be an outcast, conscious of men's contempt for you, than to live in a fool's paradise, deceived by flattery.

2—4. i.e. when things are at their very worst they can only change, if at all, for the better: hence a man who has reached "the worst" state has everything to hope and nothing to fear.

3. *dejected*, cast down, humbled; not 'low-spirited,' as now.

4. *Stands...in esperance*, is a condition of hope. See III. 6. 95, note.

6. *to laughter*, i.e. to a happy state of things, when laughter is possible.

9. *Owes nothing to*, is no debtor to; so 'has nothing to fear from.'

11, 12. The changes of fortune make us hate the world; otherwise we should not submit so readily to—we should rebel against—advancing years and their sequel, death. The important word is "yield."

13, 14. *your tenant;* probably "the occupant of the farm-house in which Gloucester placed Lear for shelter"—*Cowden Clarke.*

20—22. The half-expressed train of ideas in Gloucester's mind seems to be this: full possession of his faculties had not kept him from "stumbling"; indeed he would have walked more circumspectly had he seen less well; for experience shows that our faculties or natural advantages ("means") make us feel too secure, careless, while our defects prove benefits ("commodities"), since consciousness of them leads us to be circumspect and take heed lest we fall.

This interpretation of 21 harmonises with 20, and gives a natural sense to *means* and a good antithesis between *means* and *defects*. The only difficulty is the verb *secure* = to make careless. Very similar, however, is *Timon of Athens*, II. 2. 185, "secure thy heart" = free

it from anxiety about, let it be confident. Moreover in Elizabethan English the adjective *secure* and *security* often convey the notion 'careless, over-confident'; see G.

Some of the old editors changed the text to *mean secures*, and took *mean*=a mean or middle condition, and *secures*=is a security, safeguard; as though Gloucester meant that a man in a middle station escapes dangers to which great men are exposed. But this thought seems to have no logical connection with what has preceded.

Some again adopt Knight's explanation—"'Means' is here used only in the common sense of resources, powers, capacities. The means, such as we possess, are our securities, and further, our mere defects prove advantages." But Gloucester's very point is that his "means" (i.e. sight) had *not* proved a security to him: "I *stumbled* when I saw."

23. *abused*, deceived; see G.

26. *"at the worst";* cf. his first speech, 2—9.

34, 35. *my son Came then into my mind;* cf. III. 4. 156.

37, 38. The answer to Gloucester's words, as far as his sufferings are concerned, is given by Edgar, v. 3. 171—174.

38. *How should this be?* What does this mean? referring to Gloucester's blindness and present plight.

54. *daub it*, keep up the disguise. Cf. *Richard III.* III. 5. 29, "So smooth he daub'd his vice with show of virtue." Literally 'to whiten,' Lat. *dealbare.*

The *it* is a cognate accusative referring to the action of the verb; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, II. 1. 226, "But bear it as our Roman actors do," i.e. behave, literally bear the bearing=manner, behaviour. So 'revel *it*,' i.e. the revel, 'fight *it* out,' i.e. the fight. The implied object is generally indicated thus by the sense of the verb.

60. *Five fiends;* see III. 4. 108, 131, 134; III. 6. 30, notes.

63, 64. *mopping and mowing*, making grimaces and mouths at; see each in G. The phrase occurs in Harsnet's *Declaration*, a story in which is probably referred to in the remark about "chambermaids."

67, 68. *that I am wretched Makes thee* etc. His gift to Edgar (66) illustrates his meaning, viz. that misfortunes teach us to relieve those in distress; a thought developed in what follows.

69. *superfluous*, who has more than he requires; cf. II. 4. 261. The general sentiment in 69—73 is similar to that in III. 4. 33—36; misfortune has taught Lear and Gloucester the same lesson, and the fact is intentionally emphasised by the similarity of their language

70. *That slaves your ordinance.* "Who, instead of paying the

deference and submission due to your ordinance treats it as his slave, by making it subservient to his views of pleasure or interest"—*Heath*.

your ordinance, your dispensation that there should be inequalities of rank and wealth in the world. The rich man who studies only his own pleasure treats this general law as if it were laid down by Providence merely for *his* special interest and benefit.

Editors quote instances of *slave* used as a verb, e.g. Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, IV. 3, "a sire, that slaves me to his will."

75. *a cliff*, i.e. "Shakespeare's Cliff" at Dover. See IV. 6. 11.

76. *in*, into; cf. V. 3. 51; or perhaps the metaphor of 'looking in' a mirror, to which the sea might be compared—*Malone*.

Scene 2.

Enter Goneril and Edmund. We saw her set out homeward under his escort, III. 7. 1—21.

1. *mild;* said scornfully. Cf. I. 4. 337—340.

2. *Not met;* cf. II. 1. 75, note.

3. *never man so changed;* being disgusted (38—67) with the treatment of Lear, which he had disliked at the outset (I. 4. 324).

7. *the loyal service*, i.e. in betraying Gloucester to Cornwall.

8. *sot*, fool; F. *sot*.

14. *Which tie him* etc., i.e. which a man of spirit would resent.

14, 15. *Our wishes* etc.; what we have been wishing on our way hither may come to pass, viz. that Albany may be got rid of and Edmund take his place.

16. *musters;* see G. *powers*, forces.

Giving a favour, i.e. some trinket.

22. *Decline*, bend down—for what purpose the next words show.

22, 23. The change from the formal *your* to the familiar *thy* is evidently meant to suit her action (Abbott).

24. *Conceive*, understand, i.e. her feelings to him, wishes, etc.

29. *I have been worth the whistle.* Displeased that Albany has not come out to meet her (1, 2), she says, 'time was when you thought me worthy of some attention.' Steevens quotes an old proverb, "It is a poor dog that is not worth the whistling."

31—50. From *I fear* to *of the deep* is omitted in the Folio. There are other omissions in the Scene, made, I suppose, to shorten the action.

32. *it;* see *his* in the Glossary.

33. *border'd certain*, restrained surely, with certainty, i.e. so that one can depend on its not breaking out into monstrous excesses.

34. *sliver*, tear off as a branch; cf. *Macbeth*, IV. 1. 28, "slips of yew Sliver'd in the moon's eclipse."

35. *material sap*, the sap which forms the matter, substance, of the branch; *maternal* is a needless change.

36. *to deadly use;* "to the use which belongs to a dead thing: burning, that is"—*Moberly*. This seems more probable than Warburton's view that the words refer "to the *use* that witches and enchanters are said to make of *wither'd branches* in their charms."

39. *savour*, relish, have a palate for.

50. *Milk-liver'd;* see II. 2. 15.

52, 53. i.e. he is so ready to 'suffer' and put up with things, that he does not see when he is doing so at the expense of his honour. The Folio omits from *that not know'st*, 53, to *does he so*, 59.

54, 55. Apparently she means—unsuccessful villany is inexcusable, and *only* fools (observe its emphatic position) pity the villain who bungles in his crime and gets punished. She cynically admits the evil of her treatment of Lear, speaks as if Albany were as much responsible for it as she herself and they were *both* "villains," and tries to taunt him into action. It seems very improbable that in "villains" she refers to Lear and is rebuking Albany for his pity of the king (41—45); though "their mischief" might conceivably allude to Lear's intention of "resuming" his power (1. 4. 304), a danger that has become serious through the intervention of the French king ("France," 56).

56. *noiseless*, not ringing, as it should, with the sound of the drum in sign of war, and with warlike preparations.

57. *thy state begins to threat;* a good emendation by Jennens, combining what seems likeliest in the readings of the Quartos. The 1st has "thy *state* begins *thereat*," the 2nd "thy *slaier* begins *threats*." The Folio omits the passage. Of course, "France" is the subject of "begins," and "state" the object of "threat" (threaten).

58. *moral*, moralising. Cf. *As You Like It*, II. 7. 29,

"when I did hear
The motley fool thus *moral* on the time."

59. *See thyself;* instead of judging him. *thyself;* emphatic.

60. *Proper*, proper to, belonging to (Lat. *proprius*) the fiend. What follows (62, 63) indicates physical 'deformity,' i.e. hideousness as well as moral ('vileness'). In the old play Perillus rebukes Gonorill thus:

"Nay, peace thou monster, shame unto thy sexe;
Thou fiend in likeness of a human creature" (p. 384).

62, 63. Albany is expanding the thought of "deformity" suggested

in 60, 61. He tells Goneril warningly that she is becoming externally in appearance—cf. "changed"—the "monster" that she is inwardly in character.

No doubt, his rebukes have stung her, and an expression of passion and hate in her face gives point to, perhaps directly inspires, his words (Furness).

Thou...self-cover'd thing; "thou who hast put a *covering on thyself* which nature did not give thee...[viz.] the semblance and appearance of a fiend"—*Malone;* i.e. "hast hid the woman under the fiend"—*Johnson.* Personally I cannot help thinking that *self-cover'd* might be taken quite literally='covered *with* thy self,' i.e. thy character, meaning that the change in her inward nature is stamped all over her outward appearance. Another explanation is—Albany means that Goneril's evil self has been hitherto covered and concealed, but is now becoming revealed through the "change" in her outward person. This interpretation, however, really treats "changed *and* self-cover'd" as though it were "self-cover'd (i.e. hitherto) *but* (now) changed," i.e. it involves an antithesis which the whole phrase will not bear, and an inversion of the order of the participles. Both Quartos have *felfe-couerd=self-covered;* the Folio omits the passage, 62—69. All the emendations are unsatisfactory, e.g. *self-converted* ('self-changed,' a mere repetition of *changed*), *sex-cover'd* ('covered as thou art with the lineaments of a woman, yet guilty' etc.).

63. *Be-monster not thy feature,* do not make thyself look like a monster. *feature,* the whole external appearance, 'make' (F. *faiture*).

64. *blood,* passion, anger.

68. *Marry, your manhood now!* Well, now you are showing yourself a man! i.e. in railing at her. It seems to be a sarcastic withdrawal of her former charge of want of courage (50). The Quartos vary between *now* and *mew,* meant perhaps as a sound of contempt.

73. *remorse,* pity; see G.

76. *fell'd him.* Apparently the Messenger does not know what really occurred (III. 7. 79).

78—80. Albany is thinking of what he had said, 46—50.

83. *One way I like this well;* thinking that she may wrest Regan's share of the kingdom from her. She reverts to the same idea in 86, 87.

85. i.e. may bring to nothing all her castles in the air—their "wishes on the way" (14). Steevens compares *Coriolanus,* II. 1. 215, 216:

"my very wishes,
And the buildings of my fancy."

Scene 3.

The whole scene is omitted in the Folio. Probably it was omitted in the stage-version, to shorten the action, which is quite clear without it.

a Gentleman; "the same whom Kent had sent with letters to Cordelia" (III. 1)—*Johnson.*

6. *his personal return was most required.* This explanation accounts very naturally for the absence of the French king, which had to be explained in some way. Of course, dramatically, his withdrawal from the action was advisable on several grounds, one being that it adds greatly to the pathos of the situation that Cordelia is left thus alone to do the best she and her army can for Lear.

12. *Trill* = 'trickle' is the same as the Middle English *trillen*, which Chaucer has in the sense 'to turn round,' from a Scandinavian word *trilla*, to roll. Distinct from *trill* in music, 'to shake,' quaver = Ital. *trillare.*

17. *express her*, make her appear.

18. Furnivall aptly compares the king's words in *All's Well That Ends Well*, v. 3. 32—34:

> "I am not a day of season [i.e. a seasonable day],
> For thou mayst see a sunshine and a hail
> In me at once."

18, 19. *her smiles and tears Were like a better way*, i.e. her smiles and tears were *like combined sunshine and rain*, only in a better, more beautiful manner, because the smiles were not marred by the tears (19—21) as the sunshine by the rain. This view (substantially Boaden's) makes *a better way* an adverbial phrase qualifying *like*, from which it should strictly be separated by a comma—*were like, a better way*—or in reading by a slight pause. For *way* some read *May* (cf. the same emendation in the famous "my way of life," *Macbeth*, v. 3. 22); others *day*. Now the comparison of tears and smiles with the mingled rain and sunshine of May is very pretty (though April were a more appropriate month); but why "better"—what is "a *better* May"? Apparently 'one better than the ordinary,' which surely is prosaic. Warburton boldly declared, "it is plain we should read *a wetter May*, i.e. a spring season wetter than ordinary." But on the whole, in view of *better*, the text of the Quartos seems preferable to any of the changes.

22. The comparison of pearls with tears was a favourite; cf. *Lucrece*, 1213, "And wiped the brinish pearl from her bright eyes."

24. *could so become it*, could make it seem so becoming.

Made she no verbal question? Did she not *say* anything? Shakespeare sometimes uses *question* = speech, remarks.

29. *believed*, i.e. believed in, believed to exist.

31. The Quartos have *And clamour moistened her.* If we keep this reading we must take *clamour* = grief or 'outburst of grief.' Few editors, however, retain *her*, which was probably repeated by error from line 30 and is not required by the metre. Omitting *her*, Capell explained: "*Clamour* may stand for the exclamations preceding [i.e. 'Sisters, sisters' etc.], which Cordelia *moistens* with the tears which followed them instantly"; i.e. the words are a poetical way of saying that her outcries of grief were succeeded by an immediate burst of tears. Some editors omit *her* but read *clamour-moisten'd*, a participle, and apply it either to *eyes* ("heavenly and *clamour-moisten'd*") or to *she* in "*she* started" (which requires a change of punctuation). In either case the sense is 'wet with tears.' But *clamour-moisten'd* is open to the same objection as the reading of the Quartos, viz. that it makes *clamour* (the expression of grief) equivalent to grief itself.

32—34. *the stars.* Kent, old-fashioned like Gloucester, believes in their "influence." *govern;* omission of the relative; see p. 253; *conditions*, dispositions. *one self*, the same; for *self* cf. 1. 1. 63, note.

42. *elbows;* perhaps 'urges him on,' i.e. in his obstinate course (cf. 40, 41) of not seeing Cordelia. Schmidt says 'haunts, harasses,' from the idea of standing always at the elbow. Some have read *bows*.

51. *dear;* important; from the notion 'affecting one closely.'

Scene 4.

3. *fumiter*, fumitory; mentioned among several weeds in *Henry V.* v. 2. 45, "The darnel, hemlock and *rank fumitory*." *rank*, of growth.

It is thought that in these passages Shakespeare had in view the poor agriculture of his time. "The monks, who had been the pioneers of agricultural improvement [i.e. on the monastic estates], were gone"; and the old system of "village-farms"—land worked in common—meant an unequal standard of cultivation. See *Shakespeare's England* (1916), "Agriculture."

4. *burdocks;* the Quartos have *hor-docks*, whence some read *hoar-docks;* the Folio *Hardokes*, possibly a corruption of *harlocks*, a plant mentioned by Drayton but not, apparently, identified. Most editors think that Shakespeare meant the burdock, a common weed.

cuckoo-flowers; no doubt the same as "the cuckoo-buds of yellow

hue" mentioned in *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 906. Probably the cowslip or buttercup is meant; not, as has also been suggested, the Ragged Robin, the flower of which is of pink, not "yellow" hue.

5. *Darnel;* the "tares" (*lolium temulentum*) of the parable, *Matthew* xiii. 25.

5, 6. *idle*, unprofitable...*sustaining*, 'nourishing'; of course contrasted. *century*, a troop (properly 100, Lat. *centum*) of men.

10. *helps*, cures. This (rather than 'prevent') seems the notion in phrases like 'I cannot help it.'

11. *means;* treated as a singular like 'news'; hence "there *is*."

13. *The which;* cf. F. *lequel.*

14. *simples operative*, efficacious medicinal herbs.

15. *close the eye of anguish.* Cf. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, III. 2. 435, "sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye."

anguish; i.e. physical pain, as well as mental distress.

16. *virtues*, efficacies, powers; see G.

17. *Spring*, i.e. like seed, watered by her tears.

23—28. Said by Shakespeare with a view to reconciling an Elizabethan audience to the presence of French troops on English soil.

26. *important*, importunate. Cf. *Much Ado About Nothing*, II. 1. 73—75, "if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in everything."

27. *blown*, inflated, puffed up; cf. *Twelfth Night*, II. 5. 48, "look how imagination blows him."

Scene 5.

13. *nighted;* Gray uses the same natural metaphor in speaking of Milton's blindness—[he] "Clos'd his eyes in endless night," *The Progress of Poesy*, 102.

20. *Belike*, perhaps, maybe. The disjointed style marks her hesitation in making the request that follows.

22. *Madam, I had rather.* "I know not well why Sh. gives to Oswald, who is a mere factor of wickedness, so much fidelity. He now refuses the letter; and afterwards, when he is dying, thinks only how it may be safely delivered"—*Johnson.* But Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature taught him that almost, if not quite, every man has some touch of goodness in him, and he is always fair to his villains.

25. *œillades*, glances; see G.

26. *of her bosom*, in her confidence.

29. *take this note*, i.e. a letter to Edmund ; cf. "give him this," 33, and see again v. 3. 28. Some editors explain 'take note *of* this' or 'observe what I am saying,' on the ground that "note" cannot mean 'letter' because only *one* letter—Goneril's—is found on Oswald, or rather read out by Edgar, in IV. 6. 242—249 ; yet Oswald himself had said "the letters" (229).

32. *gather*, infer, guess without her telling.

33. *this ;* if "note" in 29 does *not* mean 'letter,' then "this" here must refer to some trinket that she sends Edmund.

35. *call her wisdom to her*, i.e. be reasonable and see things in a right light—viz. that she must give up Edmund.

Scene 6.

1. *that same hill ;* cf. IV. 1. 75 (note).

7. *alter'd.* "Edgar alters his voice in order to pass afterwards [see 72] for a malignant spirit"—*Johnson.*

11—22. The picture is meant to be imaginative rather than precise. Edgar purposely exaggerates so as to increase the effect of the "miracle" which Gloucester is to think has been wrought in his favour. Various touches, however, suggest that Shakespeare was describing what he had seen ; cf. 15, 21, 57, notes.

Johnson objected that the description was too detailed :

"He that looks from a precipice finds himself assailed by one great and dreadful image of irresistible destruction. But this overwhelming idea is dissipated and enfeebled from the instant that the mind can restore itself to the observation of particulars, and diffuse its attention to distinct objects. The enumeration of the choughs and crows, the samphire-man and the fishers, counteracts the great effect of the prospect [view], as it peoples the desert of intermediate vacuity, and stops the mind in the rapidity of its descent through emptiness and horror."

Knight's answer to this objection seems conclusive, viz. that the dramatic necessity of these details lies in Gloucester's blindness :

"The mode in which Edgar describes the cliff is for the special information of the blind Gloucester,—one who could not look from a precipice. The crows,...the samphire-gatherer, the fisherman...—each of these, incidental to the place, is selected as a standard by which Gloucester can measure the altitude of the cliff. Transpose the description into generalities, and the dramatic propriety at least is utterly destroyed. The height of the cliff is then only presented by an image to Gloucester's mind upon the vague assertion of his conductor."

The reader too of the play (as in the Elizabethan theatre the spectator) is in the same position as Gloucester, i.e. equally in need of these successive details which, as it were, lead the imagination from the crest to the base of the precipice. In fact, no description of a scene can convey that "great effect of the prospect" which sight does; the impression must be less vivid, and it will be vague if there are no definite objects and points of colour on which the mind's eye can rest.

It may be that the lack of scenery (i.e. of appeal to the eye) on the Elizabethan stage had something to do with the introduction of long passages of description.

13. *choughs*, jackdaws; see G.

14. *gross*, big.

15. *Hangs*, i.e. suspended by a rope.

one that gathers samphire. Cf. Malone's note: "This personage is not a mere creature of Shakespeare's imagination, for the gathering of samphire was literally a *trade* or common occupation in his time, it being carried and cried about the streets, and much used as a pickle. So, in a song in Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece*, in which the cries of London are enumerated under the title of the cries of Rome: 'I ha' Rock-sampier, Rock-sampier: Thus go the cries in Rome faire towne,' etc. *Dover Cliff* was particularly resorted to for this plant. Cf. Drayton, *Polyolbion*, viii.:

'Rob Dover's neighbouring cliffs of samphire, to excite
His dull and sickly taste, and stir up appetite.'"

19. i.e. to the size of her cock-boat (a sort of punt or dinghy).

21. *unnumber'd*, innumerable; see *untented* in G.

pebble; so the Folio, and best retained, I think, in a collective sense, like 'the sand.' The change 'pebbles' gives a most unpleasant sound with 'chafes' following. The description is very true to the locality; cf. Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach*.

28. *another purse;* cf. IV. 1. 66.

33, 34. Edgar sees that the only way to keep his father from suicide is to make him believe that heaven has interposed miraculously to prevent his self-destruction. After the "miracle" Gloucester feels that the gods have pronounced so clearly against his suicide that he must continue to live and bear his afflictions. Cf. 72—77.

38. *opposeless*, irresistible.

39. *snuff*, burnt out; see G.; for the metaphor cf. I. 4. 211, note.

42—44. *conceit*, imagination. For the whole idea cf. Montaigne: "Some there are, that through fear anticipate the hangman's hand; as he did, whose friends having obtained his pardon, and putting away the cloth wherewith he was hood-winkt, that he might hear it [the pardon] read, was found stark dead upon the scaffold, wounded only by the stroke of imagination" (*Essays*, Florio's translation, I. xx.).

42. *I know not how;* an elliptical turn of expression='I know not how it is, but it is the fact that.'

47. *pass*, i.e. pass away, die; cf. v. 3. 314. "We still use the word *passing* bell"—*Johnson.*

48. *What are you, sir?* Here Edgar assumes another character; cf. Gloucester's question, 201.

49. *gossamer;* see G.

53. *at each*, i.e. in a long line; "placed at the extremity of each other"—*Theobald.*

54. *fell;* for the interchange of the forms of preterites and past participles see *mistook* in the Glossary.

57. *chalky;* another descriptive detail appropriate to Dover. *bourn*, boundary, limit (i.e. of the land); see G.

58. *shrill-gorged*, shrill-throated, with high notes. F. *gorge*, throat.

71. *whelk'd;* either 'covered with whelks, i.e. knobs, protuberances,' or 'swollen like whelks.' For the noun cf. *Henry V.* III. 6. 108, "his face is all bubukles, and whelks, and knobs" (said of Bardolph).

72. *It was some fiend.* For the notion of spirits leading men to destruction, e.g. by throwing themselves over precipices, as here, cf. *Hamlet*, I. 4. 69, 70 (referring to the ghost):

> "What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
> Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff?"

father; a common title of respect for an old man, and of course Gloucester thinks that Edgar uses it so. Cf. a pretty scene in the old play (Hazlitt's ed., p. 372) where the king, who in his distress has come to France to seek help of his daughter, meets her and her husband disguised as country-folk:

"*Cordella.* Ah, good old father, tell to me thy grief.
Leir. Ah, good young daughter, I may call thee so;
For thou art like a daughter I did owe" (i.e. possess).

73. *the clearest;* "the purest; the most free from evil"—*Johnson;* others say, 'the most glorious.' But perhaps, 'it is the gods beyond all question—most clearly—who have been your preservers.'

74. *Of men's impossibilities*, i.e. by doing things that men cannot.

79. "*The fiend*"; referring to Edgar's constant references, in his assumed madness, to "the foul fiend" (III. 4).

80. *free*, i.e. from anxiety, distress.

81. *safer*, sounder. *accommodate*; cf. *unaccommodated*, III. 4. 101. Roughly, 'he must be out of his mind to dress himself up thus.'

83. *coining*; suggested by the "press-money" (87) in his hand.

87. *press-money*, i.e. the money ("prest-money") given to a man when he was forced into military service—"impressed," V. 3. 51 (like Falstaff's men, 1 *Hen. IV.* IV. 2). Cf. the 'press-gangs' for the navy.

Lear has seen some of the British or French troops assembled near Dover, and the sight has given this military turn to his thoughts.

87, 88. *a crow-keeper*; "a person (a boy generally) employed to scare the crows from the corn-fields and armed with a bow and arrows"—*Dyce*; also called 'crow-herd.' The word sometimes meant 'scare-crow,' i.e. a stuffed figure representing a man and holding a drawn bow, as perhaps in *Romeo and Juliet*, I. 4. 6:

"Bearing a Tartar's painted *bow* of lath,
Scaring the ladies *like a crow-keeper*."

Douce quotes a passage from Ascham's treatise on archery, *Toxophilus*, which implies that 'to shoot like a crow-keeper' was a proverbial description of an awkward archer.

88. *a clothier's yard.* Editors quote the old ballad *Chevy Chace:*

"An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew he."

91. A *bill* was a halberd or pike, i.e. a sort of battle-axe at the end of a long staff; the ordinary weapon of English foot-soldiers in olden times. "A 'brown bill,' like the old brown Bess, was browned to preserve it from rust"—(*Globe* ed., Glossary).

well flown, bird! This phrase belongs to falconry, but Lear applies it to the arrow, because of its feather. His next words show that he is thinking of archery alone, not of falconry too.

clout, the white mark (i.e. the "blank," I. 1. 153) in the centre of the target, the bull's-eye.

92. *Give the word*; the watchword.

93. *Sweet marjoram*; said in allusion to Lear's "wild flowers."

97. *told me I had white hairs*, i.e. told him that he was an old man, whereas his foolish actions had proved him to be still a boy.

98, 99. *To say "ay" and "no."* His flatterers answered, not what they really thought but what they supposed would be pleasing to

him. If he seemed to expect the answer 'ay,' they said 'ay': if 'no,' then their answer was 'no.'

106. *trick*, peculiarity, distinguishing mark. Cf. *King John*, I. 85, "He hath a trick of Cœur-de-lion's face"; and *The Winter's Tale*, II. 3. 100, "the trick of his frown."

112, 113. *For Gloucester's...son* etc. There is a dreadful 'irony' in the king's ignorance of the truth.

114. *civet;* perfume from the civet-cat; cf. III. 4. 98—100, "thou owest...the cat no perfume."

"An apothecary...in the olden time was the recognised perfumer as well as drug-vendor"—*Dr Bucknill.*

118. *piece;* almost='masterpiece, model.' Cf. *Pericles*, IV. 6. 118, "Thou art a piece of virtue."

119. *so*, i.e. even as Lear's "little world of man" (III. 1. 10) has worn out.

121. *squiny*, squint at; see G. He takes Gloucester for some woman making eyes at him; cf. Edgar's words, III. 6. 23, 24.

blind Cupid. This notion of Cupid's blindness is mediæval rather than classical. An explanation of it is offered by Helena in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, I. 1. 234, 235:

> "Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
> And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind."

The grim appropriateness here of "blind" needs no comment.

125. *this;* not merely Lear's state nor Gloucester's blindness, but the 'terror and pity' of the whole scene between them.

128. *the case of eyes*, i.e. the mere sockets. The metaphor is shown by *Pericles*, III. 2. 99, "Her eyelids, *cases* to those heavenly *jewels*."

129. *are you there with me?* is *that* what you mean?

130, 131. *in a heavy case*, in a bad way; a quibble on the previous use of "case." *light*, i.e. empty.

135—138. The thought which forms the leading idea in *Measure for Measure.*

handy-dandy; an old game among children; one held an article and changed it quickly (cf. "change places") from one hand to the other, and his playmate had to guess in which hand it was.

141—153. This tirade is really an anachronism, since it satirises the vices of a social state far removed from the primitive conditions of the nominal period of the play's action. In fact, the speaker is, to some extent, Shakespeare. *small*, even small.

146. *furr'd;* such as the ermine-trimmed robes of judges, peers.

Plate, clothe in plate armour. The Folio has *Place;* Theobald made the correction. The Quartos omit 146—151 (from *Plate* to *lips*).

149. *able 'em*, give them the means, i.e. money (cf. "take that," 150), to set things straight. *'em;* see G.

152. *politician;* in Shakespeare always a depreciatory word, implying 'intriguer, schemer.'

155. *matter and impertinency*, sense and nonsense: a good description of the king's ravings, with their intermittent flashes of sanity.

impertinency, that which is not pertinent, i.e. relevant, and so incoherent; "rambling thought, folly"—*Schmidt.*

164. *this great stage of fools.* Cf. the famous passage, "All the world's a stage" in *As You Like It*, II. 7. 139 *et seq.*, where the editors show that the idea is not peculiar to Shakespeare; also *The Merchant of Venice*, I. 1. 77—79, and *Sonnet* 15.

This' = this is. *block*, fashion of a hat; properly the wooden shape on which hats are formed.

The passage is usually explained thus: Having said, "I will preach to thee" (161), Lear has taken off his hat and put it in front of him, and begun his sermon ("When we are born" etc.); but his eye happens to fall on his hat, he notices the material (felt), and suddenly it occurs to him that "felt" (166) could be put to another use, viz. to shoeing horses; in this fresh turn to his thoughts he naturally forgets about the 'preaching.'

Collier objected, with some justice, that Lear would not be likely to be wearing a hat—rather a crown of wild flowers—and changed the reading to *plot.* But the objection does not justify the change (which really makes "stratagem" somewhat superfluous).

165, 166. Cf. Malone: "This 'delicate stratagem' had actually been put in practice fifty years before S. was born, as we learn from Lord Herbert's *Life of Henry the Eighth*, p. 41: 'the ladye Margaret... caused there a juste [i.e. joust, tournament] to be held in an extraordinary manner; the place being a fore-room raised high from the ground by many steps, and paved with black square stones like marble; while the horses, to prevent sliding, *were shod with felt* or flocks (the Latin words are *feltro sive tomento*): after which the ladies danced all night.'"

168. *kill, kill!* "formerly the word given in the English army when an onset was made"—*Malone.*

172. *The natural fool of;* "one born to be the sport of." Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, III. 1. 141, "O, I am fortune's fool!"

176. i.e. this would draw tears from any man.

179. *smug*, trim; see G.

183. *there's life in't*, i.e. there's still hope.

190. *toward;* cf. II. 1. 10; III. 3. 18.

191. *vulgar*, spoken of everywhere, known on all sides.

194, 195. *the main descry;* the appearance of the main body is expected every hour. *Stands on;* cf. 'to be on the tip-toe of expectation.'

196. *Though that;* cf. "lest that," 214, and see I. 1. 243, note.

on special cause, i.e. to care for Lear.

198—200. Gloucester's thought is prompted by the feeling that after all there is some one (Lear) worse off than himself.

199. *worser;* several times in Shakespeare; cf. emphatic double comparatives and superlatives.

202. *tame to;* so the Folio; the Quartos have *lame by;* cf. *Sonnet* 37, "So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite."

203. *art*, experience or teaching.

feeling, keen, poignant; some say 'heartfelt.' Either way it is probably, as Schmidt explains, a gerund='a sorrow *for* feeling,' i.e. such as you cannot help feeling.

204. *pregnant*, ready, disposed; cf. II. 1. 76, note.

207. *To boot*, as well as, in addition to, his "thanks"; see G.

209. *To raise my fortunes;* cf. Regan's words, IV. 5. 37, 38.

210. *thyself remember*, think over your sins and repent.

211. *let thy friendly hand* etc.; said to Oswald. Gloucester welcomes death, which he has recently sought.

216—226. "When our ancient writers introduce a rustic they commonly allot him this Somersetshire dialect"—*Steevens*.

chill, chud. These are compound forms (said to exist still as dialect-forms in Somersetshire and Devonshire) of the auxiliary verb and the pronoun of the first person singular; *Ch* being a short ('aphetised') form of *Ich*, which was the Southern Middle English form of *I*. Thus *chill=Ichille=Ich+wille*, 'I will'; so *chud* is 'I would,' *cham*, 'I am.' This 'agglutination' of the pronoun *Ich*, or its short form *Ch*, to the verb occurs before a vowel, *h* or *w* (as in *chill* and *chud*), and commonly with the auxiliary verbs; cf. *Ichabbe=Ich+habbe*, 'I have.' See Morris's *Outlines* (revised ed. 1895), pp. 176, 177.

vurther, volk. *V* in place of *f* was another characteristic of the Southern dialects. In the old poem of *The Owl and the Nightingale*, written in Dorsetshire some time in the reign of Henry III. (1260 or

thereabout), we find *vo* for *foe*, *vairer* for *fairer*, etc. (Earle, *Philology*, p. 58). And the same pronunciation may still be heard any day in Somersetshire; *fallow field* is always (from a labourer) *vallow vield*.

An example of this southern or south-western dialect (Somerset, Wilts, Dorset) occurs in Golding's translation (a favourite book with Shakespeare) of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. "It seems to have become a fixed [literary] convention that the speech of country people should be represented in no other way" (e.g. on the stage). See p 250.

221, 222. *che vor ye*, I warn you. *ise*, I shall. *costard*, head; see G. *ballow*, cudgel. Each is a rustic word.

226. *foins*, thrusts; see G.

229. *the letters*, i.e. Goneril's (IV. 5. 6) and Regan's "note" (IV. 5. 29). As, however, only the former is mentioned in what follows, some editors argue that we should read 'letter.'

230. *Earl of Gloucester*. The title would bring home to Gloucester and his legitimate son the extreme treachery of the bastard Edmund; and their feelings should be indicated—i.e. in the acting of *Lear*—by some gesture from them as the words are spoken.

231. *British;* here the Folio has *English;* contrast III. 4. 174.

239. *Leave, gentle wax*. Cf. Malvolio's apology as he breaks the seal of the letter he has picked up—"By your leave, wax," *Twelfth Night*, II. 5. 102, 103.

244. *fruitfully*, abundantly. *offered*, i.e. in the coming battle.

250. *undistinguish'd*, not to be defined. For the termination *-ed=-able* see *untented* in the Glossary. *space*, scope, reach.

The general sense seems, 'It is impossible to calculate what direction a woman's desires will take, you can never be sure about them.' Edgar is astonished that Goneril should prefer his brother to her husband, the "virtuous" Albany, and sees in her preference an instance of caprice. For *will* (the Folio) the Quartos have *wit*='there is no limit to a woman's ingenuity.'

Edgar has been described as "the most religious person in the play... he interprets everything religiously," and represents that faith in good which no amount of evil (such as we get in *King Lear*) can shake.

256. *death-practised*, whose death is plotted.

259. *ingenious*, conscious; from the notion 'dwelling in the mind' (Lat. *ingenium*). So Schmidt explains; some say 'sensitive, acute.'

Scene 7.

soft music playing. It has been pointed out that belief in the efficacy of music in the treatment of the insane (cf. *Richard II.* v. 5. 61—63) is very old, as David's playing before Saul shows (1 *Samuel* xvi.), but that the influence is not always beneficial. On the stage music is always an effective accompaniment in pathetic scenes.

5. *go with*, coincide with. *modest*, moderate; as in II. 4. 24.

7. *weeds*, clothes; see G. *memories*, memorials.

9. *Yet;* emphatic; 'as yet, so soon.' *shortens*, causes to fall short and so fail. *my made intent*, the purpose I have formed.

10. *know...not*, i.e. do not openly acknowledge.

16. We had the same metaphor—from music—to describe insanity in IV. 3. 39. Cf. *Hamlet*, III. 1. 165, "Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh" (referring to Hamlet's mind in his 'madness'). *wind up*, i.e. like the strings of an instrument, e.g. a lute or violin.

17. *child-changed*, changed *by* his children, i.e. through their conduct. Some explain 'changed *to* a child.'

24. *of his temperance*, of his being calm (after the sleep).

27. *Thy medicine*, the medicine that will heal thee (Lear).

35. *cross*, darting zig-zag; forked lightning; cf. *Julius Cæsar*, I. 3. 50, "the cross blue lightning."

perdu, lost one. The term was Anglicised from the French phrase *enfans perdus* = soldiers sent on a 'forlorn hope,' i.e. to execute in war any very hazardous operation.

36—38. *this thin helm;* Lear's scanty locks (30). Cf. III. 7. 62—64.

39. *rogues.* See note on II. 3. 14. Elizabethan England was infested with vagabonds. The main cause of the evil was unemployment due variously to the break-up of the feudal system, the dissolution of the monasteries, the conversion of arable land into pastures for the sake of wool required by the rise of manufactures, and the enclosure of commons under the Tudors. And many of these vagrants were soldiers broken in the wars and cast adrift. See the chapters on "Agriculture" and "Rogues and Vagabonds" in *Shakespeare's England* (1916).

40. *short*, scanty; the same idea that one gets in a phrase like 'short commons,' i.e. an inadequate supply.

53. *abused*, deceived by appearances; cf. 77 and see G.

59. *you must not kneel.* There is a similar scene in the old play.

60. *fond*, foolish; see G.

65. *mainly*, quite, perfectly; from the literal meaning 'by might'; cf. the colloquial use of 'mightily,' e.g. 'you are mightily mistaken,' i.e. quite.

66. *skill*, sense, intellect.

67. *nor...not;* the emphatic double negative; see p. 253.

80. *even;* a verb='go over so as to bring into consistency,' i.e. connect the present with the past. What the doctor fears is that the shock of reviving memory will throw Lear off his mental balance again.

83. *walk*, withdraw.

85—97. Omitted in the Folio; no doubt, for the same reason that the end (98—106) of III. 7 was omitted, viz. that the Scene should close with a more obvious climax—in this case, the exit of Lear and Cordelia at line 84.

89. *the bastard son;* such a description as we should expect from Kent: for him Edmund is no "Earl of Gloucester" (IV. 6. 230).

94. *arbitrement*, decision.

96. *point and period*, object in view and end. One beautiful incident (line 59) of this scene is taken up again: Shakespeare saw that "on the stage...two persons kneeling to each other cannot but produce a comic effect"; so, keeping the hint from the old play, he used it (V. 3. 10) "in such a manner that only its delicacy remains, while its external awkwardness disappears"—*Brandes.*

ACT V.

Scene 1.

4. *constant pleasure*, fixed wishes, settled determination.

6. *doubted*, feared. Cf. *doubtful*='afraid.'

9. *honour'd*, honourable.

10. *conjunct;* cf. II. 2. 111.

11. *bosom'd*, admitted to her confidence; cf. "of her bosom," IV. 5. 26. *as far as we call hers;* "so that we must needs call you hers"—*Moberly.*

21—25. Omitted in the Folio, and probably corrupt in some way. The lines seem to be a kind of apology and explanation, showing that Albany does not wish to appear as the willing associate of Goneril and Regan in their conduct towards Lear, and defining his (Albany's) position in the whole affair.

'I could never,' he says, 'fight in a bad cause; but *as for this* business, it concerns us in so far as the king of France, with certain others, is the invader of our country, not in so far as he is the supporter of Lear'; i.e. it is in the former character (invader) alone that France is resisted by Albany. Note that the lines serve—perhaps were intended to by Shakespeare—to reconcile the audience to the invidious part which circumstances force the moderate Albany to play.

bolds, emboldens; implying 'is the supporter of.' The subject to the verb is "France." Mason suggested "not *the old* king," i.e. France, not Lear, is the invader.

26. *Sir, you speak nobly.* Ironical.

28. *particular broils*, private dissensions. F. *brouiller*, to jumble.

30. *the ancient of war;* those long experienced in war, the chief veterans; or some particular veteran, of whom the description would be readily understood. The ordinary military sense of *ancient* = 'ensign, standard-bearer' is obviously not appropriate here.

34. *convenient*, becoming, proper; a hint that Goneril should not stay behind with Edmund (cf. 32, 33).

35. *I know the riddle*, I see what you are driving at; probably a proverbial expression.

42. *miscarry;* a euphemism for 'be killed.'

44. *machination ceases;* "all designs against your life will have an end"—*Johnson.*

45. *forbid.* If Edgar waited there would have to be explanations how he got the letter, and he might have to disclose his identity.

48. *o'erlook*, read; as we say 'look over'; cf. I. 2. 34.

51, 52. *your...you;* emphatic. Others have done their part in reconnoitring ("discovery"), now Albany himself must act promptly.

54. *jealous* = suspicious, as the comparison shows.

59. *carry out my side;* probably a metaphor from card-playing = be on the winning side, and so 'succeed in my schemes.' Editors quote from Massinger's play *The Great Duke of Florence*, IV. 2, "If I hold your cards, I shall pull down the side; I am not good at the game." Cf. 'to take sides.'

62, 63. It is characteristic of his selfishness that he leaves the risk to Goneril. Cf. *Macbeth*, I. 7. 20, "The deep damnation of *his taking off*" (Duncan's murder).

66. *Shall never see.* There may be an omission of "they" (Lear and Cordelia), the constructions in 65 being taken absolutely. But I think

that 65 is meant as the subject of "shall"—e.g. 'the conclusion of the battle, with them in my power, will never see any pardoning.'

67. *Stands on me to defend*, needs defence not discussion.

Scene 2.

Mr Spedding commented on the abruptness of this Scene, remarking how the momentous battle to which our expectation has been directed so pointedly is dismissed in the most summary fashion, and contrasting Shakespeare's practice elsewhere. His remarks, quoted by Furness, are:

"In other cases a few skilful touches bring the whole battle before us—a few rapid shiftings from one part of the field to another, a few hurried greetings of friend or foe, a few short passages of struggle, pursuit or escape, give us token of the conflict which is raging on all sides; and, when the hero falls, we feel that his army is defeated. A page or two does it, but it is done. As a contrast with all other battles in Shakespeare, observe [this one]...The army so long looked for, and on which everything depends, passes over the stage, and all our hopes and sympathies go with it. Four lines are spoken. The scene does not change; but 'alarums' are heard, and 'afterwards a retreat,' and on the same field over which that great army has this moment passed, fresh and full of hope, reappears, with tidings that all is lost, the same man who has last left the stage to follow and fight in it." Mr Spedding argued that there has been a wrong division of the Acts, and that Shakespeare meant Act IV. to extend to line 4 of this Scene, and Act V. to begin with Edgar's words, "Away, old man," line 5: the battle then takes place between the Acts, and the impression of hurry which the present arrangement conveys is removed.

But the very fact that "all our hopes and sympathies go with" the army which is beaten seems a reason why the contest should be passed over lightly. Moreover, the great length of the play may have weighed with the dramatist.

1. *father;* see IV. 6. 72, note, and cf. "old man" in 5.

10. *going hence*, departure from this world.

11. *Ripeness*, readiness.

Editors compare *Hamlet*, V. 2. 231—234, "If it [his end] be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the *readiness is all.*"

Scene 3.

2, 3. *their greater pleasures...That*, the wishes of those greater persons who. Edmund's duplicity is soon apparent (27—38).

That; the antecedent is contained in *their* (of those); cf. 51, 52, "our...which," i.e. of us who.

3. *censure*, pass sentence upon. The noun is used='sentence, decision' in the old play:

> "Cease, good my lords, and sue not to reverse
> Our censure, which is now irrevocable."

3—6. The rhyme gives an effect of moralising.

7. *these daughters;* cf. II. 4. 55, "where is this daughter?"

8—19. Contrast this speech with Lear's first meeting with Cordelia after his partial recovery, IV. 7. 59—84. Shakespeare leaves us to infer what another might have attempted to represent on the stage, viz. the complete reconciliation between the king and his child, a reconciliation in which his former feeling of "sovereign shame" (IV. 3. 42) has no part. Note that the idea of kneeling (IV. 7. 59) is repeated.

15. *who's in*, i.e. in office.

16, 17. "As if we were angels commissioned to survey and report the lives of men, and were consequently endowed with the power of prying into the original motives of action and the mysteries of conduct"—*Johnson.*

18. *packs*, confederacies, coalitions; implying 'for a bad purpose'; cf. *packings*, III. 1. 26.

20—25. Dr Bucknill comments on these lines thus:

"This is not mania, but neither is it sound mind. It is the emotional excitability often seen in extreme age, as it is depicted in the early scenes of the drama, and it is precisely true to the probabilities of the mind's history, that this should be the phase of infirmity displaying itself at this moment. Any other dramatist than Sh. would have represented the poor old king quite restored to the balance and control of his faculties. The complete efficiency of filial love would have been made to triumph over the laws of mental function. But Sh. has represented the exact degree of improvement which was probable under the circumstances, namely, restoration from the intellectual mania which resulted from the combined influence of physical and moral shock, with persistence of the emotional excitement and disturbance which is the incurable and unalterable result of passion exaggerated by long habitude and by the malign influence of extreme age." (Quoted by Furness.)

20. *sacrifices.* Lear seems to have a premonition of what is coming.

23. *fire us hence like foxes;* "an allusion to the practice of forcing foxes out of their holds by fire"—*Heath.* Lear means, of course, that he and Cordelia will not be easily parted again.

24. *good-years;* a corruption of F. *goujère*, the name of a disease.

them, i.e. their captors, whom he scorns to name.

fell, skin; generally used of a skin with the hair or wool on, i.e. an animal's: hence contemptuous here. The word is closely related to *pell*, a skin, hide, Lat. *pellis.* "Flesh and fell" was one of those proverbial phrases due to alliteration.

25. *Ere they shall make us weep.* A flash of his old fire; cf. I. 4. 291—294; II. 4. 278—282.

28. *this note*, i.e. his "writ on the life of Lear and Cordelia," 246.

34. *question*, discussion.

36. *write happy*, consider your fortune made; cf. 30, 31.

37. *instantly;* so as to forestall "the mercy" which Albany intends (v. 1. 63, 64). *carry it*, carry out the "great employment."

41. *strain*, breeding, race.

43. *the opposites of*, our adversaries in.

50. *the common bosom*, the affections of the people.

51. *our impress'd lances*, the spears of the soldiers pressed into our service. Cf. Lear's reference to "press-money," IV. 6. 87.

It is to be supposed that Albany here manifests some surprise at Edmund's assumption of equality (note "our" twice).

62. *Not as a brother*, i.e. colleague; perhaps too with a hint that Edmund has not taken the place of Albany's brother-in-law Cornwall.

66. *immediacy*, position of direct authority. He has been Regan's direct representative, with no intermediate between him and the power which he wielded on her behalf. *may;* emphatic, as she is retorting (cf. 67) to Albany's words "not as a brother" (62).

68, 69. *grace* (noble qualities, merits), a sarcastic glance at Regan's words in 62, "as we list [choose] to *grace* him." *your addition*, a title given by you; cf. II. 2. 20.

73. Steevens quotes an old proverb, "Love being jealous makes a good eye look a-squint."

74. *I am not well.* Cf. 96, 97, 228.

75. *stomach*, anger; cf. Lat. *stomachus* in same sense.

77. *the walls are thine;* probably a metaphor implying complete surrender, as of a camp or fortress; she gives herself up entirely to

Edmund ("General," 75). Some think that there is a reference to Regan's castle (cf. 246).

79. *Mean you to enjoy him?* A dreadful piece of sarcasm in view of what she has done.

80. *let-alone;* practically, I think = 'permission, consent,' from the radical notion 'not interfering, forbearance.' But some interpret 'prohibition, hindrance.'

your good will, i.e. Goneril's. Albany means that the time has come when he is going to assert himself and expose Goneril and Edmund.

84. *attaint*, impeachment; see G. To accuse Edmund is to accuse his guilty associate (Goneril). The Folio has *arrest*, a mere repetition, surely, from 83. The whole speech illustrates Shakespeare's partiality for legal terms; cf. III. 6. 35, note.

90. *interlude*, comedy; here used with something of its radical sense (see G.), since Albany's intervention interrupts Regan's love affair.

96. *Sick, O, sick!* "The gradual sickening of Regan, from the poison she has taken, is true to nature"—*Dr Bucknill.* Contrast the rapid death of the queen in *Hamlet*, v. 2. 300—321.

104. *virtue*, valour; see G.

Enter a Herald. Many of the details of this Scene, such as the three challenges by trumpet-note, are taken from the system of the *Duello*, or Single Combat, and are therefore anachronisms in this play.

The same criticism applies to the interview between Samson and Harapha in Milton's *Samson Agonistes;* see the notes in the Pitt Press edition on ll. 1102, 1222, 1224—1226.

Shakespeare refers in *As You Like It*, v. 4. 95, to the great authority on the Duello and its laws, namely, a treatise (1595) by Vincentio Saviolo, the 2nd book of which treats "of Honor and honorable Quarrels."

125. *cope*, encounter; see G.

129—131. Malone explains: "Here I draw my sword. Behold, it is the privilege or right of my profession [as knight] *to draw it* against a traitor."

132. *Maugre*, in spite of (F. *malgré*).

133. *fire-new;* cf. 'brand-new.'

142—148. He means that if he cared to act cautiously (cf. "in wisdom") and punctiliously ("nicely"), he could decline the combat till he knew who his adversary was. "By the law of arms" (153) a knight was only bound to fight with those of equal "quality or degree"—cf. the Herald's proclamation and 121. Edmund is no coward.

144. *that*, i.e. *since* that=since.

say, taste; short for *assay*. The tasters at the king's table who partook of the dishes first (for fear of poison) were said to *assay* them.

145. *What...I might well delay*, the objection which I might raise very properly, or 'the reluctance which I might show.'

safe and nicely; the adverbial termination *ly* goes with both words. Schmidt gives numerous similar cases, e.g. "I'll serve thee true and faithfully till then," *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2. 841. *nicely;* see G.

148. *hell-hated*, hated (or hateful) as hell.

149—151. 'which charges of treason my sword shall thrust to your very heart.' *Which;* when the speaker began he intended to use some word like 'drive,' 'thrust.'

152. *Save him!* "Albany desires that Edmund's life might be spared at present, only to obtain his confession, and to convict him openly by his own letter"—*Johnson*. But many would assign the words to Goneril. *practice*, a trick, plot.

155. *cozen'd;* see G.

156. *Hold, sir;* a form of address, like 'there!' used in handing something (here the letter); spoken to Edmund.

158. *No tearing*. A somewhat similar incident occurs in the old play of *Leir*.

161. *Ask me not what I know*. Assigned in the Folio to Edmund, who, "with some spirit of manhood, refuses to make any answer that will criminate or blacken a woman by whom he is beloved"—*Hudson*. The Quartos assign the speech to Goneril, but Albany's previous words "I perceive you [Goneril] know it," make it very unlikely that his last question "Know'st thou this paper?" was addressed to her.

167. *exchange charity*, i.e. he in turn will forgive Edmund.

171, 172. Bishop Wordsworth compares the *Book of Wisdom*, xi. 16, "wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished." See I. 1. 15, IV. 1. 37, 38, notes.

Remember that Edmund is the *younger* son. This was emphasised at the outset (1. 2. 1—6), to show the nature of Gloucester's sin, i.e. that it was a transgression against the vows of wedlock.

175. *The wheel*, of fortune; cf. II. 2. 166. Edmund's villany has worked out its own nemesis, and it is a nemesis, as has well been said, "of exquisite exactness." He "meets his death in the very moment of his success, at the hands of the brother he has maligned and wronged, while the father he has deceived and sought to destroy

is the means by which the avenger has been brought to the scene"—*Moulton*.

189. *habit*, dress.

190, 191. The same metaphor as in IV. 6. 128.

195. *success*, fortune, issue; see G.

197. *flaw'd*, broken; cf. II. 4. 281.

199. *passion;* see G.

205—208. *period*, end, climax; cf. IV. 7. 96. The Folio omits from *This would have*, 205, to *slave*, 222.

another. Either (1) another 'such story or incident,' i.e. such as "this," 205, or (2) 'another person'—contrasted with those who "love not sorrow"; either way, the balance of the sentence indicates, I think, that *but* has its ordinary adversative sense, which here is best expressed by emphasizing *another*.

It seems to me that (1) is preferable and that "another" is meant to prepare, as it were, apologetically, for the story about Kent that follows. We might paraphrase 205—208:

'All who do not revel in grief would have thought that the limit had been reached in *this* story: *another* such story, in seeking to increase (or simply 'by increasing') that which is already too much, would make "much" into "more" and pass beyond the utmost limit.'

Some corruption of text seems probable; and the great obscurity is probably the cause of the omission of the speech from the Folio.

There are many textual discrepancies throughout the Scene, perhaps because it is the last of a long play.

231. *Produce;* for the literal use = Lat. *producere*, cf. *Julius Cæsar*, III. 1. 228, "Produce his body to the market-place."

232, 233. "If Shakespeare had studied Aristotle all his life he would not perhaps have been able to mark with more precision the distinct operations of *terror* [cf. 'makes us *tremble*'] and *pity*"—*Tyrwhitt*. Cf. Aristotle's definition of the effect of Tragedy, viz. that it excites 'pity and fear (ἔλεος...φόβος), and purifies those passions in us.'

235. *manners;* singular in sense ('courtesy'), like 'news.'

246—248. Cf. 27—38.

256. *fordid*, destroyed; see G.

263. *stone;* referring to a crystal mirror—*Delius*. Cf. 2 *Henry IV*. IV. 5. 31—34. 264. *end;* i.e. of the world.

265. *image of*, i.e. something very like it, if not the end itself. *Macbeth*, II 3. 83, "The great doom's image," has been compared.

Fall, and cease; apostrophising "the end," he says, 'fall and have done.' "Cease" implies that it should no longer be held in suspense over mankind (cf. "promised"). Capell explained, 'Fall, heaven! and let things cease!' supposing that Albany was intended to accompany his words by actions which would make the appeal intelligible, e.g. by looking up to the sky and stretching forth his hands in entreaty. Some think that the words are spoken to Lear ('Bring your miserable life to an end'). It is just possible that the gentle Albany means himself, as if he were overcome by the whole scene.

266. Editors quote 2 *Henry IV.* IV. 5. 31—34:

"By his gates of breath
There lies a downy feather which stirs not:
Did he suspire, that light and weightless down
Perforce must move."

274. An expression, surely, of Shakespeare's own opinion.

275. *a-hanging thee;* should be *of thee*, since *a-hanging*='on (i.e. in) hanging' (the verbal noun). See II. 1. 39, note.

277, 278. Editors compare *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, II. 1. 135, 136, "I have a sword and it shall *bite*" (cut keenly); and II. 1. 235—237, "I have seen the time, with my long sword I would have *made* you four tall fellows *skip* like rats"; and *Othello*, V. 2. 261. *Good;* the soldier's epithet for his sword; cf. *Othello*, V. 2. 262, *Coriolanus*, IV. 2. 25.

281, 282. *loved and hated*, i.e. exercised her caprice upon, by showing them favour once and then ill-will. *One*, Lear; Kent the other.

289. *your first of*, the very beginning of your change of fortune.

290. Lear is too much dazed to care about Kent or his two daughters (292). "His capacity for receiving new impressions is almost gone. He can feel nothing but Cordelia's death"—*Brandes*.

291. *Nor no man else.* Qualifying Lear's last words. "Welcome! alas, here's no welcome for me or anyone"—*Capell*. Another obvious explanation is that the words are a continuation of "have follow'd" (290), Lear's remark "You are welcome" being treated and punctuated as a parenthetic comment which Kent does not notice. But it makes Kent dwell too much on his loyalty. *Nor no;* cf. IV. 7. 67.

298, 300. *this great decay...this majesty;* fine uses of the abstract for the concrete, Lear being meant in each case.

301. *you;* understand 'we will restore' from 299.

302. *With boot*, with increase of dignity etc.

305. *O, see, see!* Some sudden physical change passes over the king, and prepares the spectators for his end.

Furness quotes from the *Quarterly Review:* "Scarcely have the spectators of this anguish had time to mark and express to each other their conviction of the extinction of his mind, when some physical alteration, made dreadfully visible, urges Albany to cry out, 'Oh, see, see!' The intense excitement which Lear had undergone, and which lent for a time a supposititious life to his enfeebled frame, gives place to the exhaustion of despair. But even here, where any other mind would have confined itself to the single passion of parental despair, S. contrives to indicate by a gesture the very train of internal physical changes which are causing death. The blood gathering about the heart can no longer be propelled by its enfeebled impulse. Lear, too weak to relieve the impediments of his dress, which he imagines cause the sense of suffocation, asks a bystander to 'undo this button.'"

306. *And my poor fool is hang'd.* The balance of opinion is greatly in favour of making these words refer to Cordelia, not the Fool—on these grounds: (1) at such a moment Lear's thoughts would not stray from the dead child over whom he is bending; (2) his next words clearly allude to her; (3) she had been hanged and he had seen it—cf. 275; (4) the expression "poor fool" occurs elsewhere (*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV. 4. 98; *Much Ado About Nothing*, II. 1. 326) as a term of endearment and pity, "fool" being often used then like 'innocent,' so that the whole phrase might here be equivalent to 'my poor darling innocent,' and be so interpreted by an Elizabethan audience.

Yet, though this view is most probable, I think that many of us would *like* to believe that there had flashed through the old man's wandering, dying thoughts a momentary recollection of his faithful follower, a recollection instantly lost in the night of grief over his child. Perhaps indeed he does think of both.

314. *pass*, i.e. away, die; cf. IV. 6. 47.

315. *tough*. There is no good authority for *rough*.

320—327. The rhyme shows that the end is at hand.

321. *gored*, sorely wounded.

322. *a journey...to go*. A favourite metaphor; cf. *Hamlet*, III. 1. 78—80:

> "something after death,
> The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
> No traveller returns."

323. *My master;* of course, Lear. Kent means that his life-work is done and that Albany must not look to him for help to "rule in this realm" (321).

GLOSSARY.

Abbreviations:—

A.S. = Anglo-Saxon, i.e. English down to about the Conquest.

Middle E. = Middle English, i.e. English from about the Conquest to about 1500.

Elizabethan E. = the English of Shakespeare and his contemporaries (down to about 1650).

O.F. = Old French, i.e. till about 1600. F. = modern French.

Germ. = modern German. Gk. = Greek.

Ital. = Italian. Lat. = Latin.

NOTE: In using the Glossary the student should pay very careful attention to the context in which each word occurs.

abuse, IV. 1. 23, 'to deceive,' like F. *abuser*. Cf. *Cymbeline*, III. 4. 123, "my master is abused," and I. 4. 124, "you are abused" = 'mistaken.' Commonly 'to use ill' (II. 2. 142, III. 7. 90).

admiration, I. 4. 231, 'wonder, astonishment'; cf. *admire* = 'to wonder,' Lat. *admirari*, and *admirable* = 'to be wondered at.' Cf. *Twelfth Night*, III. 4. 165, "wonder not nor admire"; *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, V. 27, "strange and admirable."

advise, II. 1. 27; often reflexive in Elizabethan E. = 'consider,' like F. *s'aviser*. Cf. 1 *Chronicles* xxi. 12, "advise thyself what word I shall bring again to him that sent me" (Revised Version "consider"). So *advisement* = 'consideration': "the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away," 1 *Chronicles* xii. 19.

alarum; another form of *alarm*, properly 'a summons to take up arms,' from Ital. *all' arme*, 'to arms!'—Lat. *ad illa arma*; common in stage-directions (v. 2). Hence

alarumed, II. 1. 53, 'thoroughly aroused, ready for the combat'; cf. *Paradise Lost*, IV. 985, "Satan alarmed...stood," i.e. 'prepared for the fight,' not 'afraid.' Now *alarum* keeps the idea 'summons, call,' while *alarm* indicates the fear which such a summons causes.

allow, II. 4. 187, 'to approve of'; cf. *Luke* xi. 48, "ye allow the deeds of your fathers," and *Romans* vii. 15, "that which I do I allow not." Lat. *allaudare*, 'to praise.'

an. Note that—(i) *an* is a weakened form of *and* (*d* often drops off from the end of a word: cf. *lawn*=*laund*); (ii) *and*='if' was a regular use till about 1600. Cf. Bacon, *Essays* (23), "they will set an house on fire, *and* it were but to roast their egges"; *Matthew* xxiv. 48, "But *and if* that evil servant shall say." The 1st Folio (1623) often has *and* where modern texts print *an*; e.g. in I. 4. 175, "*And* you lie."

The phrase *and if* or *an if* really='if if,' since *and* or *an* by itself expresses the condition: *if* was added to strengthen it. How *and* or *an* came to have the meaning 'if' is doubtful.

argument, I. 1. 210, 'subject, theme'; the literal sense of Lat. *argumentum*. Milton at the beginning of *Paradise Lost* calls his subject "this great argument" (I. 24).

aroint, III. 4. 116. The phrase "aroint thee, witch" was evidently proverbial; cf. *Macbeth*, I. 3. 6, "'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump-fed ronyon cries." Editors refer to Ray's *North Country Words* (1691), which has: "*Ryntye*, by your leave, stand handsomely. As '*Rynt you, witch*, quoth Bessie Locket to her mother'; Proverb, *Cheshire*." Seemingly this *rynt* is a short ('aphetised') form of *aroint*. The sense of *aroint* is clearly 'avaunt, begone!' and probably it is the same as, or closely connected with, an old word *arunt* (etymology unknown); cf.

"And here sculd men arunt...confessours and oþer prestis þat assoylen for money" (i.e. priests that absolve);

"And here shul men arunte þe feend þat stiriþ men to last in þis erroure."

These extracts are from a tract by Wyclif. Dr Murray adds *Dives and Pauper*, 1496, "Make the [thee] plesaunt in speche to the congregacyon of poore folke...not arunt them ne rebuke them ne chyde them." In the first passage the sense is 'avoid,' in the others perhaps 'drive away'; each is kindred to the notion 'be gone' in *aroint*. All the old derivations of *aroint*, such as 'dii *averruncent*,' are now rejected.

As regards the statement that *Rynt thee* or '*Roint thee* is a term used in Cheshire by milkmaids to bid a cow that has been milked to get out of the way, the real phrase used appears to be *Rynd-ta*='*round*

thee,' i.e. move round, move away, *rynd* being a local pronunciation of *round*. If this be so, the phrase apparently has nothing to do with *aroint*. (From Furness's note and the *New English Dictionary*.)

arraign, 'to call a person to *account* (Lat. *ratio*), to summon him before a tribunal to answer for his actions'; hence 'to charge, accuse' (III. 6. 20, 46). Low Lat. *arrationare* (*ad*+*rationem*).

aspect, II. 2. 99. Shakespeare always accents *aspéct*. Many words now accented on the first syllable were in Elizabethan English accented on the second syllable, i.e. they retained the French accent, which (roughly speaking) was that of the original Latin words. By "accent" one means, of course, the stress laid by the voice on any syllable in pronouncing it. Thus Milton wrote "By policy and long *procéss* of time" (*Par. Lost*, II. 297); cf. French *procès*, Lat. *procéssus*. So Shakespeare scans *accéss*, *commérce*, *edíct*, when it suits him.

attaint, v. 3. 84, 'impeachment.' The verb *attaint*, whence *attainted*, 'convicted of treason,' is formed from the p.p. of *attain*, 'to reach,' hence 'to detect in, convict'; F. *atteindre*, Lat. *attingere*, 'to reach.' Not connected etymologically with **taint** (I. 1. 216), 'a stain' (Lat. *tingere*, 'to dye').

bandy; a term of tennis='to strike the ball to and fro,' hence 'to exchange,' e.g. looks (I. 4. 82), words (II. 4. 171), reproaches. Perhaps from F. *bande*, 'a side' (the ball passing from side to side).

be. The root *be* was conjugated in the present tense indicative, singular and plural, up till about the middle of the 17th century. The singular, indeed, was almost limited in Elizabethan E. to the phrase "if thou *beest*," where the indicative *beest* has the force of the subjunctive. In I. 4. 21 the Folio has "if thou *best*," i.e. *beest*. For the plural, cf. *Genesis* xlii. 32, "We be twelve brethren," and *Matthew* xv. 14, "they be blind leaders of the blind."

benison, I. 1. 260, 'blessing'; etymologically the same as *benediction*, since O.F. *beneison* and F. *bénédiction* are 'doublets,' i.e. words having the same origin; Lat. *benedictio*.

bewray, II. 1. 107, III. 6. 111, 'to reveal'; now an archaic word commonly used in allusion to *Matthew* xxvi. 73. A.S. prefix *be*+*wrégan*, 'to accuse'; cf. Germ. *rügen*, 'to censure.'

bias, I. 2. 104, 'tendency'; F. *biais*, 'a slope, slant.' The metaphorical use of *bias*='inclination, tendency' is taken from the game of bowls (a favourite Elizabethan pastime), the *bias* being the leaden weight inserted in the side of the bowl to make it run in a slanting line and *incline* a certain way. Cf. *Richard II.* III. 4. 3—5:

"*Lady.* Madam, we'll play at bowls.
Queen. 'Twill make me think the world is full of rubs,
And that my fortune runs against the bias."

boot; A.S. *bót*, 'good, advantage,' cognate with *better*, *best*. Often = 'something to the good, thrown into a bargain': cf. *to boot* (IV. 6. 207) = 'in addition'; *with boot* (V. 3. 302) = 'with more than that.' The verb is commonly impersonal, 'it boots not' = 'it is no good.'

bourn, III. 6. 25, 'a brook'; the same as the north-country *burn*; akin to Germ. *brunnen*, 'a spring.' It is distinct, of course, from

bourn (IV. 6. 57), 'a limit, boundary' = F. *borne*, 'a *bound*ary.'

brach, I. 4. 109, III. 6. 68, 'a hound that hunts by scent'; always used of the female. Late Lat. *brachetus*; cf. F. *braque*.

caitiff, II. 1. 62, 'wretch'; cognate with F. *chétif*, 'worthless, sorry.' The oldest sense in E., viz. 'prisoner,' points to the origin, Lat. *captivus*; Dr Murray quotes Wyclif, *Romans* xvi. 7, "myn euene caytifs, or prisoneris" (*euene* = 'even,' i.e. equal, "fellow-prisoners").

carbonado, II. 2. 32, 'to cut across, slice like a *carbonado*,' i.e. a piece of meat sliced for broiling, Spanish *carbonada*. Spanish words came into Elizabethan E. through wars, voyages, and trade; as some ended in *o* (cf. 'renegado'), and many Italian loan-words introduced by travellers also ended in *o* (cf. 'duello'), the practice arose of Anglicising most words imported from these languages and Portuguese by affixing the termination *o*. Cf. 'barricado' from Span. 'barricada,' 'coranto' from Ital. 'coranta.' The *o* became a mark of foreign extraction.

cataract, III. 2. 2, 'a waterspout,' Gk. *καταρράκτης*, 'downrushing,' as in *καταρράκτης ὄμβρος*, 'a storm of rain'; substantivally 'a waterfall.'

catastrophe, I. 2. 123; "the change or revolution which produces the conclusion or final event of a dramatic piece" (Johnson); 'the *dénoûment*.' Hence any 'final event,' especially an unfortunate one, 'a disaster.' Gk. *καταστροφή*, 'a sudden turn.'

censure, III. 5. 3. The original sense, common in Elizabethan E., was 'to judge' = Lat. *censere*. So *censure* = 'judgment'; cf. *Hamlet*, I. 3. 69, "Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement." As we are apt to judge others unfavourably, *censure* has come to mean 'blame.' Words tend to deteriorate in sense.

champain, or **champaign**, I. 1. 57, 'open country, plains.' Cf. *Deuteronomy* xi. 30, "which dwell in the champaign over against Gilgal, beside the plains of Moreh." Cf. F. *campagne*, Ital. *campagna*.

champion, V. 1. 41, 'one who undertakes to maintain or defend a cause in single combat'; a term drawn from tournaments. Low Lat.

campio, 'a combatant in a duel,' from *campus*, 'a field,' used in Low Lat. = 'a combat' (cf. 'field' = battle).

child. One of its oldest uses was as a title of honour = 'young knight,' III. 4. 172, applied to the son of a noble house, and often prefixed to a name, like 'Sir.' Cf. "*Child* Thopas" = *Sir* Thopas, "A *Knyght* fair and gentle" (noble-born), *The Canterbury Tales*, 2020. The use is common in old ballads and romances like *The Faerie Queene;* cf. "*Chyld* Tristram," *F. Q.* VI. 2. 36, i.e. *Sir* Tristram, called "*young* Tristram" (35). So in the title of Byron's *Childe Harold*. Akin to Germ. *Kind*.

chough, IV. 6. 13; formerly applied to any sort of crow, but in Shakespeare = 'jackdaw'; cf. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, III. 2. 21, "russet-pated choughs," i.e. 'grey-headed,' an epithet precisely suitable to the jackdaw, which has greyish plumage about the head and neck. So in *The Tempest*, II. 1. 266, "a chough of as deep *chat*," the reference clearly is to the jackdaw (though the actual sense may be figurative = 'chatterer'). Now *chough* is used only of the Cornish chough or red-legged crow, which is almost extinct; there are said to be a few pairs left, at Tintagel. Named from its *cawing*, like other birds from their notes, as 'cuckoo,' 'daw.' ("Russet" = '*grey*,' not 'red,' is an undoubted Elizabethan use; see G. to *Midsummer-N. D.*)

cockney. Its meanings may be traced thus: (1) 'a spoilt child, favourite, minion'—the commonest sense from about 1400 to about 1600; cf. Nash, *Pierce Penilesse*, 18, "A young heyre [i.e. *heir*], or cockney, that is his mother's darling." Hence (2) 'an effeminate, affected person,' especially 'an affected squeamish woman'—as in II. 4. 117. Then (3) 'a native of a town,' townsmen being often effeminate compared with country folk. Hence (4) 'a native of London' as being *the* town of England. The notion (2) 'an affected person' is brought out in this play by the absurd words which the "cockney" uses to the eels. Similarly in *Twelfth Night*, IV. 1. 15, the Clown hints that Sebastian is rather a "cockney" because he considers Sebastian's reproof "vent thy folly somewhere else" an affected phrase. The etymology of *cockney* has nothing to do with the fabulous 'land of *Cocaigne*'; it is a nonsense word = '*cock's egg*' (Middle E. *ey*).

comfort; properly 'to strengthen,' Lat. *confortare*, 'to make strong' (*fortis*). Formerly common as a term of law = 'to aid, abet'; so the noun = 'assistance' in the legal phrase 'aid and *comfort*.' Dr Murray quotes Grafton's *Chronicle* (1568), II. 74, "As touching the death of the aforesaid Becket...he sware that he was neither ayding nor

comfortyng"; and Blackstone's legal *Commentaries* (1769), IV. 82, "If a man be adherent to the King's enemies...giving to them aid and comfort." This legal sense is alluded to in III. 5. 21.

comfortable, II. 2. 157, 'comforting'; cf. *Richard II.* II. 2. 76, "speak comfortable words." Cf. also *Isaiah* xl. 2, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem." In I. 4. 301 = 'ready to comfort.'

cope, V. 3. 125, 'to encounter,' literally 'to strike'; through O.F. from Lat. *colaphus*, 'a blow with the fist,' whence F. *coup*, 'a blow.' There was a cognate E. verb *coup*, 'to come to blows.'

costard, IV. 6. 222; literally a large 'ribbed' apple (Lat. *costa*, 'a rib'); applied jestingly to the head from its shape. Cf. the slang use of 'nut.'

cozen, V. 3. 155. According to the common (but not certain) explanation, to *cozen* a man is to pretend to be his *cousin* for the purpose of getting something out of him; whence 'to cheat.' Cf. F. *cousiner*, which Cotgrave (1611) explains, "to clayme kindred for advantage or particular ends; as he, who to save charges in travelling, goes from house to house, as cosin to the owner of everie one." There was an old phrase 'to make a *cousin* of' = 'to beguile, hoax.'

craze, III. 4. 160, 'to impair'; cf. Cotgrave (1611), "*Accrazer:* To break, burst, *craze*, bruise." From Swedish *krasa*, 'to break in pieces'; F. *écraser* comes from the same source. Hence *crazy* = 'weak-minded.' Cognates: *crash*, *crack*, *creak*.

cue, I. 2. 124, 'catchword'; properly the word which is a signal to an actor to come on to the stage and speak. Some derive from F. *queue*, 'a tail,' Lat. *cauda* (cf. E. *queue*, 'a tail or twist of hair'), because an actor's *cue* is the *tail*-end of the last speech; but F. *queue* was not used so, the F. term being *réplique*. Others say (but it is not certain) that *cue* is for *Q*, the first letter of Lat. *quando*, 'when,' and that in the MS. copy given out to an actor of the part of a play which he had to learn, *Q* was marked where it was his turn to speak.

cullionly, II. 2. 27, 'wretched, base.' 'Cullion' was a term of contempt; cf. *Henry V.* III. 2. 22, "you dogs!...you cullions!" and Marlowe's *Edward II.* I. 4. 409, "With base outlandish cullions at his heels."

curst, II. 1. 65, 'harsh, angry'; especially used of women in the sense 'shrewish'; cf. "Katherine the curst" (I. 2. 128), "Kate the curst" (II. 187), in *The Taming of the Shrew*. Literally *cursed;* such words lose something of their force through colloquial use.

dally; properly 'to talk idly, chat'; cf. the *Promptorium*

Parvulorum, an old Latin-English Dictionary: "Dalyyn', or talkyn'. *Fabulor, confabulor, colloquor.*" So 'to waste time, delay' (III. 6. 93).

darkling, I. 4. 211, 'in the dark'; cf. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, II. 2. 86, "wilt thou darkling leave me?" It is a substantival *adverb*, in which *-ling* or *-long* is a relic of a dative case-ending; cf. *headlong, sidelong* (Middle E. *hedling, sideling*). In Scotch the form is *lins;* cf. *hafflins* = half, e.g. in Burns, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, 62, "While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak."

debosh, I. 4. 236; an old spelling, the only one in the Folio, of *debauch*. Perhaps connected with O.F. *bauche*, 'a workshop,' the original sense being 'to draw away from work or duty,' hence 'to corrupt.'

disaster, I. 2. 113, here used in reference to its origin as an astrological term conveying the notion 'ill-*starred*'; Lat. negative prefix *dis* + *astrum*, 'a star.'

Dolphin, III. 4. 95, 'Dauphin'; the old spelling, used always in the Folio; cf. O.F. *daulphin*, 'one whose banner bears a *dolphin*' (Lat. *delphinus*).

earnest, I. 4. 91, 'money paid beforehand as a pledge.' Through O.F. from Lat. *arrha*, from Gk. ἀρραβών, 'earnest-money, pledge.'

'em, IV. 6. 149; short for Middle E. *hem*, the dative plural of *he;* not short for *them*, the dative plural of *the* (originally a demonstrative adjective declined in three genders, singular and plural). Both *hem* and *them* came to be used as accusatives. The forms of the modern 3rd personal pronoun come partly from the root of *he* (personal), partly from the root of *the* (demonstrative).

embossed, II. 4. 220, 'protuberant, swollen'; cf. *As You Like It*, II. 7. 67, "embossed sores." The prefix *en*, 'in' + *boss*, 'a knob'; cf. F. *bosse*. Closely akin to *botch*, 'a swelling.'

engine, I. 4. 263, 'the rack.' Properly 'a contrivance,' i.e. something made with *ingenuity* (Lat. *ingenium*); hence 'instrument,' e.g. of torture. Dr Murray quotes Earl Rivers, *Dictes* (1477), "He was commanded to be put in engyne and tormented"; and Chaucer, *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, 240, "sore engyned," i.e. tortured on the rack.

entertain, III. 6. 78, 'to take into one's service'; cf. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II. 4. 110, "Sweet lady, entertain him for your servant" (i.e. engage him as). F. *entretenir*, 'to keep up, maintain.'

essay, I. 2. 40, 'a trial, testing'; except here and in *Sonnet* 110 we have *assay*, as always in Milton, from O.F. *essai* or *assai* (a variant form), Lat. *exagium*, Gk. ἐξάγιον, 'a weighing, *trial* of weight.'

exhibition, I. 2. 20, 'an allowance,' cf. Bacon's *History of Henry VII.*, "all [the revenue] was assigned to the army and garrisons there, and she received only a pension or exhibition out of his coffers" (Pitt Press ed. p. 200). Hence 'exhibition'='a kind of scholarship.' Late Lat. *exhibitio*, 'maintenance,' from *exhibere* in the legal sense 'to maintain, support,' as a parent his children.

falchion, v. 3. 277, 'sword'; Ital. *falcione*, properly 'a sword curved like a sickle' (Lat. *falx*); cf. the curved Turkish scimitar.

favour; often='face, features' (III. 7. 39). So **well-favoured** (II. 4. 252)='of good looks, handsome'; cf. *Genesis* xxix. 17, "Rachel was beautiful and well favoured." First *favour* meant (1) 'kindness,' then (2) 'expression of kindness in the face,' then (3) the face itself.

felicitate, I. 1. 69. A noticeable point in Elizabethan English is the tendency to make the past participles of verbs of Latin origin conform with the Latin forms. This is the case especially with verbs of which the Latin originals belong to the 1st and 3rd conjugations. Thus Shakespeare and Milton have many participles like **derogate** (I. 4. 275), 'create' (*creatus*), 'consecrate' (*consecratus*), 'incorporate,' where the termination *-ate*, in modern English *-ated*, =Lat. *-atus*, the passive participial termination of the 1st conjugation.

So with the Latin 3rd conjugation; Latinised participles such as **distract**, IV. 6. 260 (*distractus*), 'deject' (*dejectus*), 'attent' (*attentus*), 'suspect,' 'addict' (*addictus*), 'pollute' (*pollutus*), with many others, are to be found in Shakespeare or Milton.

fell, II. 1. 50; A.S. *fel*, 'fierce, cruel'; akin to *felon*, the older sense of which was 'a fierce, savage man,' then 'one who robbed with violence,' and so any robber.

fetch, II. 4. 84, 'a pretext,' from the more usual sense 'contrivance, device,' as in phrases like 'fetches of policy, law, state,' once not uncommon. Much the same notion as 'far-fetched.'

fiend, I. 4. 254; literally 'a hating one,' being the pres. part. of A.S. *feón*, 'to hate'; so 'an enemy.' As '*the* fiend' would be Satan, "the Adversary" of man, *fiend* came to mean 'devil.'

foin, IV. 6. 226, 'a thrust in fencing' (a favourite Elizabethan sport). O.F. *fouine*, 'an eel-spear,' Lat. *fuxina*, 'a trident.'

fond, I. 2. 44, I. 4. 296, 'foolish,' its old meaning. Hence *fondly*= 'foolishly'; cf. *Lycidas*, 56, "Ay me! I fondly dream." Originally *fond* was the p.p. of a Middle E. verb *fonnen*, 'to act like a fool,' from the noun *fon*, 'a fool.' The root is Scandinavian.

fordo, v. 3. 256='to destroy,' the usual sense. The prefix *for-* has

its privative force='away'; thus to "fordo life," *Hamlet*, v. 1. 244, is 'to do away with it.' In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, v. 381 ("All with weary task fordone") the meaning is 'to exhaust,' *for-* having an intensive force; cf. 'done up.'

forfend, 'to forbid.' The prefix *for-*, in a privative sense ('away') + *fend*, short for *defend*, 'to ward off'; cf. F. *défendre*, 'to forbid.'

fraught, I. 4. 215, 'filled'; the abbreviated p.p. (*fraughted* was rarely used) of the verb *fraught*, 'to load'—see *Cymbeline*, I. 1. 126—which is now obsolete except in this p.p. Akin probably to *freight*.

fret, I. 4. 280, 'to wear,' i.e. form by wearing away. A.S. *fretan*, short for *for-etan*, 'to eat up' (*for* being intensive). Cf. Germ. *fressen*.

gallow, III. 2. 39, 'to terrify'; A.S. *gælwian*. A corrupt form *gally* is said to be still used in the dialect of some western counties.

gasted, II. 1. 55, 'frightened.' The simple verb *gast* was rare, the compound being commonly used, especially in the p.p. *agast;* from A.S. *á*, intensive prefix + *gǽstan*, 'to terrify.' Cognates are *gastness*, 'look of terror,' *Othello*, v. 1. 106; *gastful*, 'awful, fear-inspiring,' used by Spenser, *Shepheards Calender* ('August'); and *ghastly* and *aghast*, in which the *h* is due to the influence of the allied word '*gh*ostly.'

goodman, properly 'master of the house,'—cf. *Matthew* xx. 11, "they murmured against the goodman of the house"; just as *goodwife* (whence *goody*)='mistress of the house.' But each was used as a familiar form of address ('friend'), especially towards people of humble rank, *goodman* being sometimes (II. 2. 39) contemptuous; cf. *Measure for Measure*, v. 328, "Come hither, goodman baldpate."

gossamer, IV. 6. 49, 'the filaments floating in the air'; literally *goose-summer*, being so called from their resemblance to down and the time of their appearance. Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, II. 6. 18:

"the gossamer
That idles in the wanton *summer* air."

These threads (Germ. *sommerfäden*, 'summer-threads') are due to a species of spider, but were formerly thought to be a kind of mist produced by the action of the morning sun on the dew.

his; this was the ordinary *neuter* (as well as masculine) possessive pronoun in Middle E. and remained so in Elizabethan E. Cf. *Genesis* iii. 15, "*it* shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *his* heel." There was also a use, not common, of *it* (Middle E. *hit*) as a possessive, though uninflected; especially in the phrase *it own*. Cf. *The Tempest*, II. 1. 163, "of it own kind," and the Bible of 1611 in *Leviticus* xxv. 5,

"of it owne accord." This possessive use of *it* without *own* to strengthen it seems to have been somewhat familiar in Elizabethan E., applied especially to children; cf. I. 4. 210, "by *it* young," and *The Winter's Tale*, III. 2. 101, "The innocent milk in *it* most innocent mouth."

Then from the possessive use of *it* uninflected there arose, about the close of the 16th century, the inflected form *its* in which *-s* is the usual possessive inflection, as in *his*. This new form *its* came into use slowly. There are no instances of *its* in Spenser or the Bible (1611), and only three in Milton's poetical works (*Paradise Lost*, I. 254, IV. 813, *Nativity Ode*, 106). *Its* does not occur in any extant work of Shakespeare printed prior to his death; hence it seems not improbable that the nine instances in the 1st Folio (five in a single play, *The Winter's Tale*) were due to the editors or printers of the Folio.

hurricano, III. 2. 2, 'a waterspout'; cf. *Troilus*, V. 2. 171, 172:

"the dreadful spout
Which shipmen do the hurricano call."

The *Stanford Dictionary* quotes Parke's translation of Mendoza's *History of China* (1589), "there was wont to be about them many uracanes, which are spowts of water, with many blustering winds." Then any 'very violent storm, cyclone.' From Span. *huracan*, a Caribbean word introduced into Spanish by sailors and similarly into English; the termination *o* (see *carbonado*) was gradually displaced by *e*.

influence, I. 2. 117; II. 2. 100; Late Lat. *influentia*, 'a flowing in upon' (Lat. *in*+*fluere*). It was an astrological term applied to the supposed effect of the heavenly bodies upon the earth, men's characters, fortunes etc. Cf. "the skyey influences," *Measure for Measure*, III. 1. 9. Other terms due to astrology are 'dis*aster*' (Lat. *astrum*, 'a star'), 'ill-*starred*,' 'jovial,' 'saturnine.'

inherit, II. 2. 17; then often used='to have, possess,' without (as now) the notion of '*heir*ship' (Lat. *heres*, 'an heir'). So *inheritance*='possession,' e.g. in the Prayer-Book, "And bless thine inheritance"—that is, 'thy people, thy peculiar possession.'

interessed, I. 1. 79; cf. F. *intéressé*. Editors cite various illustrations of this Elizabethan form, e.g. Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, III. 1:

"the dear republic,
Our sacred laws, and just authority
Are interess'd therein."

interlude, V. 3. 90, 'a play performed in the intervals of a banquet, festivity'; from Lat. *inter*, 'between'+*ludere*, 'to play.' Also used of any slight dramatic piece of a comic nature.

knap, II. 4. 118. The radical notion is 'to break with a noise.' Thus to 'knap ginger' (*The Merchant of Venice*, III. 1. 10) is 'to break it off by biting'; and 'to knap on the head' is (colloquially) 'to give a *crack* on the head'—as the woman did to the eels. Dutch *knappen*, 'to snap, crack'; cf. Germ. *knappen* (same sense). All are imitative words (like 'crack' and 'rap') which suggest the *sound* of the action.

liege, I. 1. 28, 'lord, sovereign'; properly 'free,' O.F. *lige* from the Teutonic root seen in Germ. *ledig*, 'free.' "A *liege* lord was a lord of a free band, and his *lieges* were privileged free men, faithful to him, but free from other service" (Skeat). Gradually *lieges* lost the notion 'free,' and came to mean 'subjects.' Probably some confusion of *liege* with Lat. *ligatus*, 'bound,' helped the change.

luxury; Shakespeare always uses *luxury* = 'lust,' the sense of *luxuria* in Late Lat.; and *luxurious* = 'lustful,' *luxuriosus*.

marry, corrupted from the name of the 'Virgin *Mary*'; cf. "by'r *lady*" = 'by our Lady,' i.e. the Virgin. Such expressions dated from the pre-Reformation times in England. The common meanings of *marry* are 'indeed, to be sure' (IV. 2. 68) and 'why' as an expletive—some contempt being often implied.

meiny, II. 4. 34, 'household, retinue'; cf. *menial*, 'one of a household.' Common in Middle E.; cf. Chaucer, *Squire's Tale*, 388, 391:

"And forth she walketh esily a pas,
* * * * * * *
Nat but with fyve or six of hir meynee."

Used in *The Faerie Queene* = 'crowd, troop' and misspelt *many* as though connected with the adj. *many*; cf. I. 12. 9, "And after, all the raskall many ran." Low Lat. *mansionata*, 'a household'; cf. F. *ménage*.

mess, I. 1. 111, 'a dish of food'; cf. *Genesis* xliii. 34, "And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs." Literally 'that which is sent to table,' Lat. *missum*; F. *mets*, 'a dish.'

methinks; **methought**, IV. 6. 69. These are really *impersonal* constructions such as were much used in pre-Elizabethan E.; their meaning is, 'it *seems*, or seemed, *to* me.' The pronoun is a dative, and the verb is not the ordinary verb 'to *think*' = A.S. *þencan*, but an obsolete impersonal verb 'to *seem*' = A.S. *þyncan*. These cognate verbs got confused through their similarity; the distinction between them as regards usage and sense is shown in Milton's *Paradise Regained*, II. 266, "*Him thought* he by the brook of Cherith stood" = 'to him it seemed that' etc. Cf. their German cognates *denken*, 'to think,' used

personally, and the impersonal *es dünkt*, 'it seems'; also the double use of Gk. δοκεῖν. For the old impersonal constructions cf. Spenser, *Prothalamion* 60, "*Them seem'd* they never saw a sight so fayre."

minikin, III. 6. 43, 'pretty little.' Dutch *minniken*, 'a darling,' a diminutive of *minne*, 'love'; cf. *minnesinger*, 'a singer of love.' Closely akin to *minion*.

miscreant, I. 1. 155, 'a vile wretch,' originally 'an unbeliever'; from Lat. *minus* + *credere*—cf. Ital. *miscredente*, 'heathen.'

mistook, II. 4. 11. Elizabethans often use the form of the past tense as a past participle—cf. **took** (v. 3. 106), **spoke** in **unspoke** (I. 1. 231), **fell** (IV. 6. 54); and conversely with certain verbs, e.g. *begin*, *sing*, *spring*, the form of the past participle as a past tense. Thus Shakespeare and Milton nearly always use *sung* instead of *sang*; cf. *Paradise Lost*, III. 18, "I *sung* of Chaos and eternal Night."

moiety, I. 1. 6, 'a portion,' properly 'a half.' F. *moitié*, Lat. *medietas*. Closely akin to *medium*.

mop, IV. 1. 63, 'to make grimaces'; the same word as *mope*, 'to be dispirited, sulky' (Dutch *moppen*), whence the notion 'look of disgust,' and so 'grimace.' Akin to *mow*, 'a grimace.'

morrow, II. 2. 151, 'morning.' These two words and *morn* are cognates, all coming from the Middle E. *morwen*, which was softened from A.S. *morgen*; cf. Germ. *morgen*.

mow, IV. 1. 64, 'to make faces, mouths, at'; cf. *The Tempest*, II. 2. 9, "like apes, that mow and chatter at me." The noun *mow*, 'a grimace,' is from F. *moue* (a word of Dutch origin), 'a pouting, a wry face'; so that 'to mow at' is like F. *faire la moue à*.

muster, IV. 2. 16. Properly a *muster*, i.e. levy, of troops was a display; O. F. *mostre* from Lat. *monstrum*, literally = 'that which shows, teaches,' hence 'an omen.'

mutiny, I. 2. 101, 'an insurrection'; not merely of soldiers, as now. Cognate with F. *émeute*; from the root of Lat. *movere*, the original idea being '*motion*, tumult.'

naughty, III. 4. 104, III. 7. 36, always used by Shakespeare = 'bad, good for *naught*'; cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, v. 91, "So shines a *good* deed in a *naughty* world." Cf. *Proverbs* vi. 12, "A naughty person, a wicked man." *Naught* = *ne*, the old negative + *aught*.

newt, III. 4. 122. The *n* has come from the indefinite article, *a newt* being = *an ewt*. For the opposite process, due to careless pronunciation, cf. *adder* (*an adder* = *a nadder*), *apron* (*an apron* = *a napron*). *Ewt* is contracted from Middle E. *evete*, 'lizard.'

nicely, II. 2. 97, 'with the utmost exactness.' *Nice* (Lat. *nescius*, 'ignorant') first meant 'foolish,' as in Chaucer, then 'foolishly particular, *very* precise.' Hence sometimes, as applied to women, 'prudish.'

œillades, IV. 5. 25, 'amorous glances'; cf. F. *jeter des œillades*, 'to make eyes at.' See *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. 3. 68. The *Stanford Dictionary* quotes Greene's *Disputation*, 1592, "What amorous glaunces, what smirking oeyliades."

old, III. 4. 112; a form, probably provincial, of *wold*, 'a down, upland,' A. S. *weald;* cf. Germ. *wald*. For the loss (by *aphæresis*) of *w* compare *ooze* = A. S. *wós*, 'moisture'; *w* (a semi-vowel) is apt to get omitted or inserted through careless pronunciation.

or ere, II. 4. 282, 'before'; really *or* and *ere* are the *same* word = A.S. *ǽr*, 'before.' We find another phrase, *or ever;* cf. *Proverbs* viii. 23, "I was set up from everlasting,...or ever the earth was." Perhaps *or ere* arose through confusion with *or ever*, people supposing wrongly that *ere*, like *e'er*, was short for *ever* (A.S. *ǽfre*).

other, I. 4. 195 = 'others'; cf. *Psalms* xlix. 10, "wise men also die... and leave their riches for other," and lxxiii. 8, "They corrupt other, and speak of wicked blasphemy" (Prayer-Book versions). In Old English *other* was declined and made its plural *othre:* when the plural inflexion *e* became obsolete, *othre* became obsolete, and for a time *other* was used for both singular and plural: this proved confusing, and a fresh plural *others* was formed by adding the ordinary plural suffix *-s*.

owe, I. 1. 197, I. 4. 117; in its original sense 'to have, possess'; cf. *Macbeth*, II. 4. 10, "To throw away the dearest thing he owed." Closely akin to *own*.

passion; any strong emotion, feeling, e.g. great joy or grief (V. 3. 199). Lat. *passio*, 'suffering, feeling,' from *pati*, 'to suffer.'

pat; the notion is 'exactly,' i.e. exactly as one could wish (I. 2. 123) or has said; from *pat*, 'to strike.' It represents, says Wedgwood, "the sound of something thrown down upon the ground, as marking the exact moment of a thing being done"—just as "*smack* represents the sound of a blow, or of a sudden fall, in such expressions as knocking a thing *smack* down, cutting it *smack* off."

pawn, I. 1. 149, 'a stake hazarded in a wager'; oftener 'a pledge' —cf. the verb, I. 2. 80. Lat. *panus*, 'a cloth,' the readiest thing to leave 'in pawn.' Cf. Germ. *pfand*, 'a pledge,' also from *panus*. (*Pawn* in chess = O.F. *paon*, Lat. *pedo*, a foot-soldier.)

peasant. O.F. *paisant*, literally 'one who belongs to the country' (F. *pays*, Lat. *pagus*, 'a village, district'). The disparaging use of *peasant*

(III. 7. 79) comes from the feeling of superiority to country folk which towns-people sometimes affect.

pelting, II. 3. 18, 'paltry'; the words are akin and connected with Swedish *palter*, 'rags, rubbish.' Cf. *Richard II.* II. 1. 60, "a pelting farm," and *Measure for Measure*, II. 2. 112, "every pelting, petty officer." We find in Elizabethan writers *pelter*, 'a mean person,' *peltry*, 'trash,' *peltingly*, 'in a contemptible manner.'

pinfold, II. 2. 8, 'a pound, i.e. enclosure for strayed cattle.' Short for '*pind*-fold,' from A.S. *pyndan*, 'to *pen* up.' Cognate with *pound*. Cf. Milton, *Comus*, 7, "Confined...in this pinfold here."

plighted, I. 1. 275, 'folded'; cf. the reading of the Quartos, *pleated*. Spenser uses *plight*='fold' both as noun and verb; cf. *The Faerie Queene*, II. 3. 26, "many a folded plight," and VI. 7. 43, "And on his head a roll of linnen plight." Cf. the cognate *plait* (or *pleat*) and F. *pli*, *plier*, etc; all from Lat. *plicare*, 'to fold.' Quite distinct from

plight, I. 1. 95, III. 4. 115, 'pledge,' akin to Germ. *pflicht*, 'duty.'

poise, II. 1. 120, 'weight' (figurative); cf. *Othello*, III. 3. 80, 82, "a suit...full of poise and difficult weight." O.F. *pois*, from Lat. *pensum*, 'a portion weighed out.'

quit, III. 7. 86, 'to revenge, re*quite*.' *Quit* was properly an adjective and the same as *quiet*, Lat. *quietus*, 'at rest,' in Late Lat. used='clear of a debt' (i.e. at rest from it). Cf. F. *quittance*, 'a receipt.'

recreant, I. 1. 161, 'a base fellow'; said of the knight who in a trial by combat owns himself vanquished and yields (Lat. *se recredit*) to his foe, thereby acknowledging his guilt.

remorse, IV. 2. 73, 'pity, compassion'; cf. *The Merchant of Venice*, IV. 1. 20, "Thou'lt show...mercy and remorse" (said to Shylock). A commoner meaning in Shakespeare than 'compunction, regret' (literally 'biting again,' viz. of conscience—Lat. *remordere*).

repeal, III. 6. 113; in the literal sense 'to recall' (F. *rappeler*, Lat. *re*, 'back'+*appellare*, to 'call,'), especially from exile. Cf. *Richard II.* II. 2. 49, "The *banish'd* Bolingbroke *repeals* himself," i.e. returns.

rival, I. 1. 39, Lat. *rivalis*, literally 'one who uses the same brook (*rivus*) as another,' e.g. for irrigating land; hence (from their disputes about the water) 'a competitor.'

sallet, III. 4. 124; a common Elizabethan form, influenced by Ital. *salata*, whereas *salad*=F. *salade*. Lit. 'something salted'; Lat. *sal*, 'salt.'

saw, II. 2. 153, 'a saying, proverb'; A.S. *sagu*, 'a *saying*.' Cf. 2 *Henry VI.* I. 3. 61, "holy saws of sacred writ"; and *As You Like It*, II. 7. 156, "full of wise saws" (said of a judge).

scape, II. 1. 80; originally short for *escape*, it became an independent form and should be printed *scape*, not '*scape*. Literally 'to slip out of one's cape' (Lat. *ex+cappa*), and so 'to steal off'; cf. F. *échapper*.

secure, IV. 1. 21, 'to make careless.' Elizabethan writers often use the adjective *secure*=Lat. *securus*, 'careless, free from fear'; especially to imply over-confidence, a false sense of safety. Cf. *Henry V.* Chorus, IV. 17, where "the *confident* French" are described as "Proud of their numbers and secure in soul"; and Fletcher's quibbling lines,

"To secure yourselves from these,
Be not too secure in ease."

In *Macbeth*, III. 5. 31, 32, "Security is mortal's chiefest enemy," the sense is 'carelessness, over-confidence.'

sennet; a term frequent in the stage-directions of Elizabethan plays for a set of notes on a trumpet, sounded as a signal, e.g. of entrance (I. 1. 26); what notes composed a 'sennet' is not known, but it was different from a 'flourish' (I. 1. 182). Sometimes spelt *signet*, which shows the derivation—Lat. *signum*, 'a sign.'

several, I. 1. 37, II. 1. 124, 'respective'; in origin (Lat. *separare*) the same as *separate*. For the sense 'respective' cf. the Prayer-Book, "to relieve them according to their several necessities."

sheep-cote, II. 3. 18; *cote* is a parallel form to *cot;* now only in compounds, e.g. 'dove-cote.' Cognate with *cottage;* cf. Dutch *kot*.

sirrah, a contemptuous form of address, generally used to inferiors. Derived through O.F. *sire* from Lat. *senior*.

sizes, II. 4. 171, 'allowance.' Cf. the terms *sizings*, 'allowances,' and *sizar*, 'a student to whom allowances are made,' still used at Cambridge. Short for *assize*, Low Lat. *assisa*, 'a *fixed* allowance of provisions.' *Assess*, *assize*, *session* are all from the root of Lat. *sedere*, 'to sit'; the notion being 'a sitting of judges to fix, decide.'

smug, IV. 6. 179, 'trim, spruce'; not necessarily contemptuous then as now; cf. 1 *Henry IV.* III. 1. 102, "the smug and silver Trent" (i.e. river). It illustrates the tendency of words to deteriorate in sense. Akin to Germ. *schmuck*, 'ornament.'

snuff, III. 1. 26, 'a quarrel'; cf. "in *snuff*"='offended, vexed,' *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, V. 254. Akin to *sniff* (a sign of annoyance) and distinct from

snuff, the wick of a candle (literally 'that which is *snubbed*,' i.e. nipped off); used as an adjective in IV. 6. 39.

spill, III. 2. 8, 'to destroy'; the old sense, A.S. *spillan*. Cf. Chaucer's phrase to 'save or spill,' i.e. to save the life of or kill,

Clerk's Tale, 503; used by Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, I. 3. 43, "Herself a yielded prey to save or spill."

squiny, IV. 6. 121, 'to look askew, *squint* at'; still used in the Suffolk dialect and in America. From a Scandinavian root='to flinch, shrink,' whence the notion of 'looking aside.'

succeed, I. 2. 132, 'to come to pass.' Cf. success='issue, result,' whether good or bad, V. 3. 195, and in *Troilus and Cressida*, II. 2. 117, "Nor fear of bad success in a bad cause."

suggestion; 'prompting to do evil' (II. 1. 73), 'temptation' are the commonest senses in Shakespeare; cf. *King John*, IV. 2. 166, *Macbeth*, I. 3. 134. So the verb='to tempt'; cf. *Richard II.* III. 4. 75, "What Eve, what serpent, hath suggested thee?"

sumpter, II. 4. 212, 'a drudge,' literally 'a pack-horse.' Corrupted (through O. F.) from Low Lat. *sagmarius*, 'a pack-horse,' from Gk. *σάγμα*, 'a pack-saddle.'

surgeon, IV. 6. 173; one Quarto has *a chirurgeon*, the old spelling =F. *chirurgien*, from Gk. *χειρουργία*, 'surgery,' literally 'working with the hand' (*χείρ* + *ἔργειν*).

taste, I. 2. 40, 'a trial of.' The radical notion in 'to *taste*' is 'to make trial of by touching.' Cf. F. *tâter*, 'to feel, try'; ultimately from Latin *tangere*, 'to touch.'

tell, II. 4. 52, 'to count, number'; cf. *Psalm* cxlvii. 4, "He telleth the number of the stars." So *tale*='a number'; cf. *Exodus* v. 18, "yet shall ye deliver the tale of bricks." Germ. cognates *zahl*, 'number,' *zählen*, 'to count.'

trice, I. 1. 211, 'moment'; a word of Spanish origin, now limited to the phrase *in a trice*="Span. *en un tris*, in an instant; from *tris*, the noise made by the cracking of glass, a crack, an instant" (Skeat).

tucket, II. 1. 78 (*stage-direction*), 'a flourish, set of notes played on the trumpet or cornet as a signal.' Generally found, as here, in stage-directions; cf. Ben Jonson, *The Case is Altered*, I. 2, end, "*A tucket sounds. Exeunt severally.*" Ital. *toccata*, 'a prelude, preliminary flourish on a musical instrument,' from *toccare*, 'to *touch*.'

unbolted, II. 2. 58. Properly *bolt* (or *boult*) is a miller's term='to sift meal from bran,' hence 'to refine.' O.F. *buleter*, a corruption of *bureter*, 'to sift through coarse red cloth' (Low Lat. *burra*, from the root of Gk. *πῦρ*, 'fire'). For *r* softening into *l* in French compare 'pè*l*erin,' Lat. 'pe*r*egrinus.'

untented, I. 4. 295, 'incurable.' Elizabethan writers constantly treat the termination *-ed*, which belongs to the passive participle, as

equal to the adjectival ending *-able;* especially with words which have the negative prefix *un-*. Cf. *unavoided* = 'not to be avoided, inevit*able*,' and *unvalued* = 'invalu*able*,' *Richard III.* IV. 4. 217, I. 4. 27. So **unnumbered**, IV. 6. 21 (= 'innumer*able*'); **undistinguished**, IV. 6. 250; and perhaps **unprized**, I. 1. 254.

varlet; properly 'a servant to a knight,' then contemptuous = 'rascal' (II. 2. 23). *Varlet* (or *valet*, another spelling) is a diminutive of O.F. *vassal*, Low Lat. *vassallus*, 'a servant, subject.'

vassal; originally 'a servant,' then 'a dependant, tenant'; used, like 'villain,' as a term of contempt = 'a low wretch' (I. 1. 155).

villain; another feudal term (cf. 'vassal') which has deteriorated. Originally *villeins* (Lat. *villani*, from *villa*, 'a country estate') were a class of labourers or serfs who owed agricultural service to their lords. Hence the Elizabethan use of *villain* = 'bondman, slave' (III. 7. 77); cf. *Lucrece* 1338, "The homely villain court'sies to her low" (referring to the 'groom' mentioned in line 1334). So *villany* sometimes = 'slavery'; cf. Marlowe, 1 *Tamburlaine*, III. 2. 38, "far from villany or servitude." Then 'slave' passed into 'wretch, rascal.'

virtue, IV. 4. 16, 'power, efficacy'; as in *Luke* viii. 46, "virtue is gone out of me." Also = 'valour' (V. 3. 104), Lat. *virtus;* cf. *Paradise Lost*, I. 319, 320:

> "After the toil of battle to repose
> Your wearied virtue."

Literally 'worth, *manly* excellence' (Lat. *vir*, 'a man').

weal, I. 4. 204, 'welfare, prosperity'; cf. *wealth*, used formerly in the same sense. Literally 'a state of being *well*,' according to one's *will* or wish; *well* and *will* are allied.

weed, IV. 7. 7, 'garments, dress'; A.S. *wæd*, 'garment.' Commonly in the plural; cf. *Coriolanus*, II. 3. 161, "With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds." Now limited to the phrase 'widow's weeds,' except in poetry; cf. Tennyson, "In words like weeds I'll wrap me o'er" (*In Memoriam*, V.).

yeoman, 'a freeholder,' considered somewhat below the rank of 'gentleman,' as is shown in III. 6. 10. "*Yeoman's* service" (*Hamlet*, V. 2. 36) was "good, loyal service such as a *yeoman* or freeholder performed for his feudal lord," and from the liability to render such service *yeoman* also meant 'servant, retainer,' as in Chaucer; cf. *The Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*, 101, "A *yeman* hadde he, and *servaunts* na-mo." The first part of the word probably means 'village' or 'country,' and is akin to Germ. *gau*, 'country, district.'

APPENDIX.

I.

THE SOURCES OF THE PLAY.

A.

HOLINSHED'S NARRATIVE[1] OF KING LEIR.

"Leir the sonne of Baldud, was admitted Ruler ouer the Britaines, in the yeere of the world 3105, at what time Ioas raigned as yet in Iuda. This Leir was a prince of righte noble demeanor, gouerning his land and subiects in great wealth[2]. He made the towne of Caerleir nowe called Leicester, which standeth vpon the riuer of Sore. It is written that he had by his wife three daughters without other issue, whose names were Gonorilla, Regan, and Cordeilla, whiche daughters he greatly loued, but specially Cordeilla the yoongest farre aboue the two elder. When this Leir therefore was come to great yeeres, & beganne to waxe vnweldie through age, he thought[3] to vnderstand the affections of his daughters towards him, and preferre[4] hir whome he best loued, to the succession ouer the kingdome. Whervpon he first asked Gonorilla the eldest, how well shee loued him: who calling hir gods to record, protested, that she loued him more than hir owne life, which by right and reason shoulde be most deere vnto hir. With which answer the father being well pleased, turned to

[1] As quoted by Dr Furness from *The second Booke of the historie of England*, chaps. v. vi. ed. 1574.

[2] prosperity. [3] determined to ascertain. [4] appoint, nominate.

the second, and demanded[1] of hir how well she loued him: who answered (confirming hir saiengs with great othes) that she loued him more than toung could expresse, and farre aboue all other creatures of the world.

Then called he his yoongest daughter Cordeilla before him, and asked of hir what account she made of him: vnto whome she made this answer as followeth: Knowing the great loue and fatherlie zeale that you haue always borne towards me, (for the which I maie[2] not answere you otherwise than I thinke, and as my conscience leadeth me) I protest vnto you, that I haue loued you euer, and will continuallie (while I liue) loue you as my naturall father. And if you would more vnderstand of the loue that I beare you, assertaine[3] your selfe, that so much[4] as you haue, so much you are worth, and so much I loue you, and no more. The father being nothing content[5] with this answer, married his two eldest daughters, the one vnto Henninus, the Duke of Cornewal, and the other vnto Maglanus, the Duke of Albania, betwixt whome he willed and ordeined that his land should be deuided after his death, and the one halfe thereof immediatelie should be assigned to them in hand: but for the third daughter Cordeilla he reserued nothing.

Neuertheles it fortuned[6] that one of the princes of Gallia (which now is called France) whose name was Aganippus, hearing of the beautie, womanhood, and good conditions[7] of the said Cordeilla, desired to haue hir in mariage, and sent ouer to hir father, requiring that he mighte haue hir to wife: to whome answere was made, that he might haue his daughter, but as for anie dower he could haue none, for all was promised and assured to hir other sisters alreadie. Aganippus notwithstanding this answer of deniall to receiue anie thing by way of dower with Cordeilla, tooke hir to wife, onlie moued thereto (I saie) for respect of[8] hir person and amiable[9] vertues. This Aganippus was one of the twelue kings that ruled Gallia in those daies, as in the Brittish historie it is recorded. But to proceed.

After that Leir was fallen into age, the two dukes that had married his two eldest daughters, thinking long ere the gouernment of the land did come to their hands, arose against him in armour, and reft from him the gouernance of the land, vpon conditions to be continued for terme of life: by the which he was put to his portion, that is, to

[1] asked. [2] can. [3] be assured. [4] i.e. love from her. [5] not at all satisfied
[6] happened. [7] qualities. [8] out of regard for. [9] pleasing, lovely.

liue after a rate assigned to him for the maintenance of his estate, which in processe of time was diminished as well by Maglanus as by Henninus. But the greatest griefe that Leir tooke, was to see the vnkindnesse of his daughters, which seemed to thinke that all was too much which their father had, the same being neuer so little: in so much, that going from the one to the other, he was brought to that miserie, that scarslie they would allow him one seruant to waite vpon him.

In the end, such was the vnkindnesse, or (as I maie saie) the vnnaturalnesse which he found in his two daughters, notwithstanding their faire and pleasant words vttered in time past, that being constreined of necessitie, he fled the land, and sailed into Gallia, there to seeke some comfort of his youngest daughter Cordeilla whom before time he hated. The ladie Cordeilla hearing that he was arriued in poore estate, she first sent to him priuilie a certeine summe of monie to apparell himselfe withall, and to reteine a certein number of seruants that might attende vpon him in honorable wise, as apperteined to the estate which he had borne: and then so accompanied, she appointed him to come to the court, which he did, and was so ioifullie, honorablie, and louinglie receiued, both by his sonne in law Aganippus, and also by his daughter Cordeilla, that his hart was greatlie comforted: for he was no lesse honored, than if he had beene king of the whole countrie himselfe.

Now when he had informed his son in law and his daughter in what sort[1] he had beene vsed[2] by his other daughters, Aganippus caused a mightie armie to be put in readinesse, and likewise a greate nauie of ships to be rigged, to passe ouer into Britaine with Leir his father in law, to see him againe restored to his kingdome. It was accorded[3], that Cordeilla should also go with him to take possession of the land, the which he promised to leaue vnto hir, as the rightfull inheritour after his decesse, notwithstanding any former grant made to hir sisters or to their husbands in anie maner of wise.

Herevpon, when this armie and nauie of ships were readie, Leir and his daughter Cordeilla with hir husband tooke the sea, and arriuing in Britaine, fought with their enimies, and discomfited them in battell, in which Maglanus and Henninus were slaine: and then was Leir restored to his kingdome, which he ruled after this by the space of two yeeres, and then died, fortie yeeres after he first began to reigne. His bodie was buried at Leicester in a vaut vnder the chanell of the riuer of Sore beneath the towne.

[1] way. [2] treated. [3] agreed.

Cordeilla the yoongest daughter of Leir was admitted Q. and supreme gouernesse of Britaine, in the yeere of the world 3155, before the bylding of Rome 54, Uzia was then reigning in Juda, and Jeroboam ouer Israell. This Cordeilla after hir father's deceasse ruled the land of Britaine right worthilie during the space of fiue yeeres, in which meane time hir husband died, and then about the end of those fiue yeeres, hir two nephewes Margan and Cunedag, sonnes to hir aforesaid sisters, disdaining to be vnder the gouernment of a woman, leuied warre against hir, and destroied a great part of the land, and finallie tooke hir prisoner, and laid hir fast in ward[1], wherewith she tooke suche griefe, being a woman of a manlie courage, and despairing to recouer libertie, there she slue hirselfe."

B.

EXTRACT FROM SIDNEY'S *ARCADIA*, BK. II.

"The pitiful state, and story of the Paphlagonian vnkinde king, and his kind sonne, first related by the son, then by the blind father."

"It was in the kingdome of *Galacia*, the season being (as in the depth of winter) verie cold, and as then sodainlie growne to so extreame and foule a storme, that neuer any winter (I thinke) brought forth a fowler child: so that the Princes were euen cõpelled by the haile, that the pride of the wind blew into their faces, to seeke some shrowding[2] place which a certain hollow rocke offering vnto them, they made it their shield against the tempests furie. And so staying there, till the violence therof was passed, they heard the speach of a couple, who not perceiuing them, being hid within that rude canapie[3], held a straunge and pitifull disputation, which made them step out, yet in such sort[4], as they might see vnseene. There they perceiued an aged man, and a young, scarcelie come to the age of a man, both poorely arrayed, extreamely weather-beaten; the olde man blind, the young man leading him: and yet through all those miseries, in both there seemed to appeare a kind of noblenesse, not sutable to that affliction. But the first words they heard, were these of the old man.

[1] in prison. [2] sheltering. [3] canopy, shelter. [4] way.

Well *Leonatus* (said he) since I cannot perswade thee to leade me to that which should end my griefe, and thy trouble, let me now intreat thee to leaue me: feare not, my miserie cannot be greater then[1] it is, and nothing doth become[2] me but miserie: feare not the daunger of my blind steps, I cannot fall worse then[1] I am: and do not I pray thee, do not obstinately continue to infect thee with my wretchednesse: but flie, flie from this region only worthie of me. Deare father (answered he) do not take away from me the only remnant of my happinesse: while I haue power to do you seruice, I am not whollie miserable. Ah my sonne (said he, and with that he groned, as if sorrow straue to breake his heart) how euill fits it me to haue such a sonne, and how much doth thy kindnesse vpbraid my wickednesse? These dolefull speeches, and some others to like purpose (well shewing they had not bene borne to the fortune they were in) moued the Princes to go out vnto them, and aske the younger what they were? Sirs (answered he with a good grace, and made the more agreeable by a certaine noble kind of piteousnesse) I see well you are straungers, that know not our miserie, so well here knowne, that no man dare know, but that we must be miserable. Indeed our state is such, as though nothing is so needfull vnto vs as pitie, yet nothing is more dangerous vnto vs, then[1] to make our selues so knowne as may stirre pitie; but your presence promiseth that crueltie shall not ouer-runne hate: and if it did, in truth our state is sunke below the degree of feare.

This old man (whom I leade) was lately rightfull Prince of this countrie of *Paphlagonia*, by the hard-hearted vngratefulnesse of a sonne of his, depriued, not onely of his kingdome (whereof no forraine forces were euer able to spoyle him) but of his sight, the riches which Nature graunts to the poorest creatures. Whereby, and by other his[3] vnnaturall dealings, he hath bene driuen to such griefe, as euen now[4] he would haue had me to haue led him to the top of this rocke, thence to cast himselfe headlong to death: and so would haue made me, who receiued my life of him, to be the worker of his destruction. But noble Gentlemen, said he, if either of you haue a father, and feele what dutifull affection is engraffed in a sonnes heart, let me intreat you to conueigh this afflicted Prince to some place of rest and securitie: amongst your worthie acts it shall be none of the least, that a king of such might and fame, and so vniustlie oppressed, is in any sort[5] by you relieued.

[1] than. [2] suit. [3] i.e. the unnatural son's.
[4] just now. [5] way.

But before they could make him[1] answere, his father beganne to speake. Ah my sonne, said he, how euill an Historian are you, that leaue out the chiefe knot of all the discourse? my wickednesse, my wickednesse: and if thou doest it to spare my eares, (the only sense now left me proper for knowledge) assure thy selfe thou doest mistake me: and I take witnesse of that Sunne which you see (with that he cast vp his blind eyes, as if he would hunt for light) and wish my selfe in worse case[2] then[3] I do wish my selfe, which is as euill as may be, if I speake vntrulie, that nothing is so welcome to my thoughts, as the publishing of my shame. Therefore know you Gentlemen (to whom from my heart I wish that it may not proue some ominous foretoken of misfortune to haue met with such a miser[4] as I am) that whatsoeuer my son (ô God, that truth binds me to reproch him with the name of my son) hath said is true. But besides those truthes, this also is true, that hauing had in lawfull mariage, of a mother fit to beare royall children, this sonne (such a one as partly you see, and better shall know by my short declaration) and so enioyed the expectations in the world of him, till he was growne to iustifie their[5] expectations (so as I needed enuie no father for the chiefe comfort of mortalitie, to leaue another ones-selfe after me) I was caried[6] by a bastard sonne of mine (if at least I be bound to beleeue the words of that base woman my concubine, his mother) first to mislike, then to hate, lastlie to destroy, or to do my best to destroy this sonne (I thinke you thinke) vndeseruing destruction. What wayes he vsed to bring me to it, if I should tell you, I should tediouslie trouble you with as much poisonous hypocrisie, desperate fraud[7], smooth malice, hidden ambition, and smiling enuie, as in anie liuing person could be harboured[8]: but I list[9] it not; no remembrance of naughtinesse[10] delights me but mine owne; and me thinks, the accusing his traps[11] might in some maner excuse my fault, which certainlie I lothe to do. But the conclusion is, that I gaue orders to some seruants of mine, whom I thought as apt[12] for such charities as my selfe, to leade him out into a forrest, and there to kill him.

But those theeues (better natured to my sonne then[3] myselfe) spared his life, letting him go to learne to liue poorely: which he did, giuing himselfe to be a priuate souldier in a countrey here by: but as he was

[1] to him. [2] state. [3] than. [4] wretched man. [5] the world's.
[6] led astray. [7] deceit. [8] contained.
[9] do not wish to. [10] wickedness. [11] wiles, deceits.
[12] fit to do such deeds.

ready to be[1] greatly aduanced[2] for some noble peeces of seruice which he did, he heard newes of me: who (drunke in my affection to that vnlawfull and vnnaturall sonne of mine) suffered my selfe so to be gouerned by him, that all fauours and punishments passed[3] by him, all offices, and places of importance distributed to his fauorites; so that ere I was aware, I had left myselfe nothing but the name of a King: which he shortly wearie of too, with many indignities (if any thing may be called an indignitie, which was laid vpon me) threw me out of my seat, and put out my eyes; and then (proud in his tyrannie) let me go, neither imprisoning, nor killing me; but rather delighting to make me feele my miserie; miserie indeed, if euer there were anie; full of wretchednesse, fuller of disgrace, and fullest of guiltinesse. And as he came to the crowne by so vniust means, as vniustlie he kept it, by force of straunger souldiers in *Cittadels*, the neasts[4] of tyrannie, and murderers of libertie; disarming all his owne countrimen, that no man durst shew himself a wel-willer of mine: to say the truth (I thinke) few of them being so (considering my cruell follie to my good sonne, and foolish kindnesse to my vnkind bastard): but if there were any who felt a pitie of so great a fall, and had yet any sparkes of vnslaine dutie left in them towards me; yet durst they not shew it, scarcelie with giuing me almes at their doores; which yet was the onlie sustenance of my distressed life, no bodie daring to shew so much charitie, as to lend me a hand to guide my darke steps: till this sonne of mine (God knowes, worthy of a more vertuous, and more fortunate father) forgetting my abhominable[5] wrongs, not recking[6] daunger, and neglecting the present good way hee was in of doing himselfe good, came hither to do this kind office you see him performe towards me, to my vnspeakable griefe; not onlie because his kindnesse is a glasse euen to my blind eyes of my naughtinesse, but that aboue all griefes, it grieues me he should desperatelie aduenture[7] the losse of his well-deseruing life for mine, that yet owe more to Fortune[8] for my deserts, as if he would carie mudde in a chest of Chrystall: for well I know, he that now raigneth, how much so euer (and with good reason) he despiseth me, of all men despised; yet he will not let slip any aduantage to make away[9] him, whose iust

[1] about to be. [2] promoted. [3] were awarded. [4] nests.
[5] The old spelling of *abominable*, from the false derivation *ab homine*, i.e. something unworthy of a man, inhuman.
[6] caring about. [7] risk. [8] deserve more misfortunes.
[9] make away with.

title (ennobled by courage & goodnesse) may one day shake the seat of a neuer secure tyrannie. And for this cause I craued of him to leade me to the top of this rocke, indeed I must confesse, with meaning to free him from so serpentine[1] a companion as I am. But he finding what I purposed, onely therein since he was borne[2], shewed himselfe disobedient vnto me. And now Gentlemen, you haue the true storie, which I pray you publish to the world, that my mischieuous proceedings may be the glorie of his filiall pietie, the onlie reward now left for so great a merite. And if it may be, let me obtaine that of you, which my sonne denies me: for neuer was there more pity in sauing any, then[3] in ending me, both because therin my agonie shall end, & so you shal preserue this excellent young man, who else wilfully follows his owne ruine."

What follows does not concern us; but all comes right—unlike the Gloucester story in *King Lear*.

II.

CHARLES LAMB'S CRITICISM.

"The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear: they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano: they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear,—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms; in the aberrations of his reason we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodised from the ordinary

[1] grovelling (?). [2] i.e. for the first time in his life. [3] than.

purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with the sublime identification of his age with that of the *heavens themselves*, when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children he reminds[1] them that 'they themselves are old'? What gestures shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show: it is too hard and stony; it must have love scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station,—as if at his years, and with his experience, anything was left but to die!"

III.

HARSNET'S "DECLARATION."

Harsnet gives the names of more than 30 "fiends," in dealing with a famous trial in London for witchcraft (1585, 1586). The names belonged to current demonology and folklore (i.e. were not invented by Harsnet), and some at least would be familiar to Shakespeare and his audience. Queer Oriental names like "Modo" and "Mahu" (III. 4. 134), came from the slang of the gypsies (the "Egyptians"), whose origin was Eastern. "Frater," whence Harsnet's and Edgar's "Frateretto" (III. 6. 6), was a cant-term, like "Bedlam beggar" (III. 3. 14), applied to a class of vagrants; it was due, I suppose, originally to the fact that after the dissolution of the monasteries many of the monks and monastic dependents had to take to a vagrant's life. There is, therefore, a contemporary, "topical" interest about these names in *King Lear*.

(*The Times Literary Supplement*, June 5, 1919; and "Rogues and Vagabonds" in *Shakespeare's England*.)

[1] See II. 4. 185—188; but the "reproaches" belong rather to III. 2. 15—24. One of the hardest things to realise in this tragedy is that Shakespeare himself was only 42 when he wrote it and depicted in Lear not so much an individual, an old man, as Age itself. But then at the other extremity of the scale he gives us Cordelia. And so we are dumb with wonder.

METRICAL TESTS

WHICH HELP TO FIX THE DATES OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.

In his early plays Shakespeare uses the rhymed couplet[1] very largely; but gradually the amount of rhyme declines, so that the proportion of rhymed couplets in a piece is one of the surest indications of the period to which it belongs.

Is there much rhyme? the play is early.
Is there little rhyme? the play is late[2].

"In *Love's Labour's Lost* there are about two rhymed lines to every one of blank verse. In *The Comedy of Errors* there are 380 rhymed lines to 1150 unrhymed. In *The Tempest* two rhymed lines occur; in *The Winter's Tale* not one[3]."

Not only do the early plays contain a good deal of rhyme, but the blank verse in them shows the influence of the rhymed couplet which Shakespeare was so accustomed to write. In his early blank verse the rhyme indeed is gone, but the couplet form remains, with its frequent pause of sense and consequently of rhythm at the end of the first line, and its still more frequent stop at the end of the second. Such verse only marks the first step in the evolution of blank verse: freedom in the expression of sense, and varied rhythm, are still absent; and freedom and variety only come when the sense "runs on" from one line to another.

[1] i.e. of five feet in each line; cf. *King Lear*, I. i. 175, 176.

[2] In applying the rhyme-test we must exclude the cases where there is a special reason for the use of rhyme. Thus the rhyme of the Masque in Act IV. of *The Tempest*, has no bearing whatsoever on the date of the play because Masques were usually written in rhymed measures. All Songs, snatches of ballads such as the Fool in *Lear* quotes, and his bits of doggerel, must, of course, be excluded.

[3] Dowden. The figures given in this paper are taken from various sources.

If at the end of a line there is any pause in the sense, however slight—such a pause for instance as is marked with a comma—the line is termed "end-stopt." If there is no pause in the sense at the end of the line it is termed "unstopt" or "run-on." There is a progressive increase of "unstopt" verse in the plays. The proportion of "unstopt" to "end-stopt" lines is in *Love's Labour's Lost* only 1 in 18·14; in *The Winter's Tale* it is 1 in 2·12.

The amount, therefore, of "unstopt" verse in a play is the second "metrical test" by which the period of its composition may be, to some extent, inferred.

The rhythm of a line depends greatly on the sense: where there is any pause in the sense there must be a pause in the rhythm. The great merit of "unstopt" blank verse is that the sense by overflowing into the next line tends to carry the rhythm with it, and thus the pauses in the rhythm or time of the verse, instead of coming always at the end, come in other parts of the line. This is invariably the case where the last word of an "unstopt" line is either what critics call a "light ending" or a "weak ending."

"Light endings" are monosyllables on which "the voice can to a small extent dwell[1]": such as the parts of the auxiliary verbs *be*, *have*, *will*, *shall*, *can*, *do;* pronouns[2] like *I*, *we*, *thou*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *they*, *who*, *which* etc.; and conjunctions such as *when*, *where*, *while*.

When one of these monosyllables occurs at the end of a line *and the sense "runs on" to the next line*, the rhythm will also "run on," the voice being able to lay only the faintest stress on the monosyllable.

"Weak endings" are those monosyllables over which the voice passes with practically no stress at all. The chief of them are the prepositions *at*, *by*, *for*, *from*, *in*, *of*, *on*, *to*, *with;* in pronunciation as in sense they have to be taken in the closest connection with the noun they govern, and it is on the noun, not the preposition, that the stress will fall. The following are also regarded as "weak endings": *and*, *as*, *but*, *if*, *nor*, *or*, *than*, *that;* so that altogether there are 17 monosyllables in the list. The use of these "weak endings" is an extension of the principle of "running on" the rhythm which was begun in the use of "light endings."

[1] Professor Ingram of Dublin, to whom the working out of this question of "light" and "weak" endings is entirely due.

[2] Only in the nominative case, if personal pronouns (with the exception of *you* which in all cases may be a "light ending").

The first play in which "light endings" are at all numerous (21) is *Macbeth*.

The first play in which "weak endings" are at all numerous (28) is *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Some of the early plays have neither "light endings" nor "weak." Some have a very few "light endings." Of "weak endings" no play has more than *two* up till *Antony and Cleopatra*. The proportion therefore of these endings—"light" and "weak"—is the third "metrical test"; but it is of use only as regards Shakespeare's last eight or nine plays, beginning with *Macbeth*[1]. Of "light" and "weak" endings combined the percentage is 4·59 in *The Tempest*; 4·83 in *Cymbeline*; 5·48 in *The Winter's Tale*.

The last notable test is the "double ending"—also called "feminine ending"—such as we get in lines like

"Meantime we shall express our darker pur|pose."
"We have this hour a constant will to pub|lish."
"That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure | it."

This extra syllable gives variety by breaking the regular movement of ten-syllabled lines such as prevail in the early plays. We see an increasing tendency, as Shakespeare's blank verse grew more complex, to introduce an extra syllable (sometimes even two—cf. *Lear*, I. 1. 35, 139), especially at the end of a line and inside the line *before or after a pause*. An extra syllable at the end not only gives variety, but also, where there is no sense-pause after it, carries on the rhythm to the next line.

The "double endings" increase from 4 per cent. in *Love's Labour's Lost* to 33 per cent. in *The Tempest*, middle plays having a percentage of about 18.

Let us apply these tests. Let us take a passage (I. 1. 101—117) from *The Comedy of Errors*, which for various reasons is universally recognised as one of Shakespeare's earliest plays:

"For, ere the ships could meet by twice five leagues,
We were encounter'd by a mighty rock;
Which being violently borne upon,
Our helpful ship was splitted in the midst;

[1] The remarkable feature in this development of Shakespeare's blank verse is the sudden increase of "light endings" in *Macbeth* and of "weak endings" in *Antony and Cleopatra*—as though he had "thrown himself at once into this new structure of verse." There is not the gradual change which we see in the case of his abandonment of rhyme, and again in the growth of "unstopt lines."

So that, in this unjust divorce of us,
Fortune had left to both of us alike
What to delight in, what to sorrow for.
Her part, poor soul! seeming as burdened
With lesser weight but not with lesser woe,
Was carried with more speed before the wind;
And in our sight they three were taken up
By fishermen of Corinth, as we thought.
At length, another ship had seized on us;
And, knowing whom it was their hap to save,
Gave healthful welcome to their shipwreck'd guests;
And would have reft the fishers of their prey,
Had not their bark been very slow of sail;
And therefore homeward did they bend their course."

In this passage we find only three "unstopt lines" out of eighteen (and the remaining three lines of the speech are all "*end*-stopt"); very few central pauses—none strongly marked; no "light" or "weak" or "double" endings. It is simply blank verse of the couplet type *minus* rhyme.

Now let us take a passage (IV. 4. 498—515) from *The Winter's Tale*, which for various reasons is universally recognised as one of Shakespeare's latest plays, if not *the* latest of his undisputed works:

"Camil|lo,
Not for Bohemia, nor the pomp that *may*
Be thereat glean'd, for all the sun sees *or*
The close earth wombs or the profound seas hide
In unknown fathoms, will I break my oath
To this my fair beloved: therefore, I pray | you,
As you have ever been my father's honour'd friend,
When he shall miss me,—as, in faith, I mean | not
To see him any more,—cast your good coun|sels
Upon his passion: let myself and for|tune
Tug for the time to come. This you may know
And so deliver, I am put to sea
With her whom here I cannot hold on shore;
And most opportune to our need I have
A vessel rides fast by, but not prepared
For this design. What course I mean to hold
Shall nothing benefit your knowledge, *nor*
Concern me the reporting."

Here we find thirteen "unstopt lines" out of eighteen, and frequent pauses inside the line, some most strongly marked; one "light" and two "weak endings"; five "double endings"; and perhaps a case[1] of an extra syllable inside the line.

No one can read the two passages without perceiving the great difference[2] between them as regards structure and rhythm.

It may not be amiss to add a few words on the comparative merits of blank verse and the rhymed couplet for dramatic purposes; to consider in fact the reasons which led Shakespeare to adopt the one and gradually abandon the other.

As a medium of dramatic expression blank verse has these points of superiority over rhyme.

(i) *Naturalness.* Rhyme is artificial. It reminds us, therefore,—perhaps I should say, never lets us forget—that the play *is* a play, a fiction and not a reality, because in real life people do not converse in rhyme. Especially in moments of great emotion does rhyme destroy the illusion of reality: we cannot conceive of Lear raving at Goneril in rhymed couplets. Blank verse on the other hand has something of the naturalness of conversation, and naturalness is a very great help towards making fiction appear like truth.

(ii) *Freedom.* The necessity of rhyming imposes restraint upon a writer such as blank verse obviously does not involve, and often forces him to invert the order of words or even use a less suitable word. The rhythm too of the rhymed couplet tends strongly to confine the sense within the limits of the couplet, whereas in the blank verse of a skilful writer the sense "runs on" easily from line to line. In fact, in the rhymed couplet the verse is apt to dominate the sense: in blank verse the case is reversed. And so blank verse has not only something of the naturalness but also something of the freedom of conversation.

(iii) *Variety.* In a paragraph of rhymed couplets the pauses in the sense and therefore in the rhythm are monotonous. You constantly have a pause at the end of the first line and almost always a pause at the end of the second. Contrast the varied rhythms of such blank verse

[1] Thus I should scan the sixth line "To this | my fair | belov(èd) | : therefore I pray you," making "belovèd" three syllables; though it may, of course, be taken as two, "belov'd."

[2] The difference has been well expressed in the remark that the earlier blank verse is more metrical than rhythmical.

as that of *The Tempest*, where the pauses are distributed with ever-changing diversity of cadence.

Again, the rhyme of a long narrative poem when read or of a short lyric when recited has a pleasing effect; but in a long spell of spoken verse I think that the sound of rhyme, though at first agreeable to it, gradually tires the ear.

It might have been explained that so much rhyme as we get in Shakespeare's later plays is mainly at the end of a scene, when it serves to indicate the conclusion, and (less commonly) at the close of a long speech, when it forms a kind of climax. As to the former use (cf. I. 2. 170, 171) Dr Abbott says: "Rhyme was often used as an effective termination at the end of the scene. When the scenery[1] was not changed, or the arrangements were so defective that the change was not easily perceptible, it was, perhaps, additionally desirable to mark that a scene was finished" (*Shakespearian Grammar*, p. 428).

Prose. Shakespeare's main uses of prose are all illustrated in *King Lear*, viz. for scenes where a purely conversational effect is required; in comic parts—cf. the Fool's speeches; in scenes of "low life" (Edgar in his disguise uses prose, except when alone; see IV. 1. 1—40); for letters (I. 2. 41—49, IV. 6. 242—249) and proclamations (V. 3. 111—115); and occasionally (as though verse were too artificial) to express overpowering passion or mental derangement: thus in III. 4 Lear speaks in verse up to the point where contact with the feigned madness of Edgar completes the overthrow of his mind, then in prose. See Abbott, p. 429.

Dialect: King Lear, IV. 6. 216—226. A little more is known now about this use of dialect. A very interesting illustration was given in *The Times Literary Supplement*, March 3, 1921, in its account of an old comedy or "interlude," *Enough is as Good as a Feast* (about 1565). A stage-direction says: "Enter an olde man Tenant and speake Cotesolde speech," i.e. Cotswold. His "speech" has the dialect-forms of the *Lear* passage, e.g. *z* for *s*, *v* for *f*: *cham* (I am), *chil* (I will). Another example is the comic parts of Preston's *Cambyses*, the old play probably alluded to in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (see Pitt Press ed. pp. 84, 115, 110). Evidently this rustic southern "speech" was simply a stage-convention, often used (as now, partly?) to make fun of country-folk for the benefit of town-audiences. For Shakespeare and the Cotswolds see *Richard II*, pp. 137, 138.

[1] There was no movable scenery; the only outward indication of the locality intended was some stage 'property'—e.g. "a bed to signify a bed-chamber; a table with pens upon it to signify a counting-house; or a board bearing in large letters the name of the place"—DOWDEN.

HINTS ON SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLISH.

THE following elementary hints are intended to remind young students of some simple but important facts which they are apt to forget when asked to explain points of grammar and idiom in Shakespeare's English.

To begin with, avoid using the word "mistake" in connection with Shakespearian English. Do not speak of "Shakespeare's mistakes." In most cases the "mistake" will be yours, not his. Remember that things in his English which appear to us irregular may for the most part be explained by one of two principles:—

(1) The difference between Elizabethan and modern English;

(2) The difference between spoken and written English.

(1) As to the former: what is considered bad English now may have been considered good English in Shakespeare's time. Language must change in the space of 300 years. Elizabethan English, recollect, contains an element of Old English, i.e. inflected English that had case-endings for the nouns, terminations for the verbs, and the like. By the end of the 16th century most of these inflections had died out, but some survived, and the influence of the earlier inflected stage still affected the language. Often when we enquire into the history of some Elizabethan idiom which seems to us curious we find that it is a relic of an old usage. Let us take an example.

There are numerous cases in Shakespeare where a verb in the present tense has the inflection *-s*, though the subject is plural; cf. the following lines in *Richard II.* II. 3. 4, 5:

"These high wild hills and rough uneven ways
Draws out our miles, and *makes* them wearisome."

The verbs *draws* and *makes* appear to be singular: but probably each is plural, in agreement with its plural antecedents *hills* and *ways*; *s=es* being the plural inflection of the present tense used in

the Northern dialect of Old English. In the Southern dialect the inflection was *eth;* in the Midland *en*. When Shakespeare was born all three forms were getting obsolete; but all three are found in his works, *eth*[1] and *en*[2] very rarely, *es* or *s* many times. His use of the last is a good illustration (*a*) of the difference[3] between Shakespearian and modern English, (*b*) of one of the main causes of that difference—viz. the influence of a still earlier inflected English.

(2) A dramatist makes his characters speak, and tells his story through their mouths: he is not like a historian who writes the story in his own words. The English of a play which is meant to be spoken must not be judged by the same standard as the English of a History which is meant to be read. For consider how much more correct and regular in style a book usually is than a speech or a conversation. In speaking we begin a sentence one way and we may finish it in another, some fresh idea striking us or some interruption occurring. Speech is liable to constant changes, swift turns of thought; it leaves things out, supplying the omission, very likely, with a gesture; it often combines[4] two forms of expression. But a writer can correct and polish his composition until all irregularities are removed. Spoken English therefore is less regular[5] than written English; and it is to this very irregularity that Shakespeare's plays owe something of their lifelike reality. If Shakespeare made his characters speak with the correctness of a copybook we should regard them as mere puppets, not as living beings.

Here is a passage taken from *Henry V.* (IV. 3. 34—36); suppose that comment on its "grammatical peculiarities" is required:

> "Rather proclaim it...
> That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
> Let him depart."

Two things strike us at once—"he *which*" and "That he...let him depart." "He *which*[6]" is now bad English; then it was quite regular English. The student should say that the usage was correct in Elizabethan English, and give some illustration of it. The Prayer-Book will supply him with a very familiar one.

[1] Cf. *hath* and *doth* used as plurals. See Abbott, p. 237.

[2] Cf. *wax-en* in *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, II. 1. 56: see *G.* to that play.

[3] Another aspect of it is the free Elizabethan use of participial and adjectival terminations. Cf. "abhorred," 1 2. 71; and see *untented* in *G.*

[4] Cf. 1. 1. 91; 1. 4. 58.

[5] Cf. II. 1. 53, 58. Note the irregular sequence of tenses in Shakespeare.

[6] Cf. 1. 4. 246; IV. 1. 47.

"That he...let him depart." A prose-writer would have finished with the regular sequence "*may* depart." But Henry V. is supposed to say the words; and at the moment he is deeply stirred. Emotion leads him to pass suddenly from indirect to direct speech. The conclusion, though less regular, is far more vivid. This brief passage therefore exemplifies the difference (*a*) between Elizabethan English and our own, (*b*) between spoken English and written. It is useful always to consider whether the one principle or the other can be applied.

Three general features of Elizabethan English should be observed:

(1) its brevity,

(2) its emphasis,

(3) its tendency to interchange parts of speech.

Brevity: Elizabethan authors love terseness. The following couplet is from *Troilus and Cressida* (I. 3. 287, 288):

"And may that soldier a mere recreant prove,
That means not, hath not, or is not in love!"

Put fully, the second line would run, "That means not *to be*, hath not *been*, or is not in love." Cf. again *Richard II.* v. 5. 26, 27:

"Who sitting in the stocks refuge their shame,
That many have and others must sit there";

i.e. 'console themselves with the thought that many have *sat* there.' This compactness of diction is very characteristic of Shakespeare. For note that the omission of the italicised words, while it shortens the form of expression, does not obscure the sense, since the words are easily supplied from the context. That is commonly the case with Shakespeare's *ellipses* or omissions: they combine brevity with clearness. Cf. the omission of the relative pronoun, a frequent and important *ellipse*, in I. 4. 59, III. 2. 12, III. 4. 25, IV. 3. 33.

Emphasis: common examples of this are the double negative (IV. 7. 67, V. 3. 291), and the double comparative or superlative (I. 1. 72, 206, 211; II. 2. 141; II. 3. 7; II. 4. 105; III. 2. 59; IV. 6. 199).

Parts of speech interchanged: "almost any part of speech can be used as any other part of speech" (Abbott). Cf. "sometime," I. 1. 114; "monster," I. 1. 215; "here...where," I. 1. 256; "faithed," II. 1. 70; "worthied," II. 2. 114; "naught," II. 4. 129; "simular," III. 2. 49 (in Folio reading); "balmed," III. 6. 98; "childed...fathered," III. 6. 110; "able," IV. 6. 149; "even," IV. 7. 80; "bold," V. 1. 24; "opposite," V. 3. 43; "mist," V. 3. 263.

INDEX OF WORDS, PHRASES AND NAMES.

This list applies to the **Notes** *only; words of which longer explanations are given will be found in the* **Glossary.** *The references are to the pages.*

Abbreviations:—

adj. = adjective. adv. = adverb. n. = noun.
trans. = transitive. vb = verb.

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And drowned in yonder living blue
the lark becomes a sightless song.
In Memoriam" Tennyson

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